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MY MEMORIES OF INDIA

EDWARD FARLEY OATEN
(Indian Educational Service)
(1909-1930)

Edited by
SUBAL GANGULI

JANAKI PRAKASHAN
PATNA NEW DELHI

First Published, 1984

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Price : Rs. 70/-

923.7
GAN

Published by :
Nand Kishor Singh
Janaki Prakashan
Ashok Rajpath,
Chauhatta,
Patna-800004.

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Branch Office :
1979, Ganj Mirkhan
Darya Ganj
New Delhi-110002

Printed by :
Shabdankan
Maujpur, Delhi-110053.

S.V. on
31/3/09

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EXPLANATORY NOTE

The *fons et origo* of the following narrative was a letter which I received from Sir Arthur J. Dash, C.I.E., a retired member of the Indian Civil Service, whom I knew in Bengal during my service, and who was there over twenty years after I left India.

Writing on behalf of the Centre of South Asian studies of the University of Cambridge, he asked me if I had a memory capable of recording my Indian memories and experiences, and offered me the use of a tape recorder for that purpose from the Centre.

As I did not feel that I could arrange my thoughts and memories sufficiently well when faced with a recording instrument, I decided to compose my narrative at leisure on paper. In attempting this task, which occupied about six weeks of such time as I could spare daily, I somewhat changed my objective. I decided that my narrative should have as its main aim that of interesting and informing my kith and kin, including my descendants long after I am gone, should they desire to know what happened to me in India. With this object in view I inserted what are intended to be literary embellishments, poems, speculations, and other non-factual matter designed to add interest and life to the story. These additions go somewhat farther than what the Centre of South Asian studies presumably envisaged. But the facts are still there, undistorted, and if the Centre desires a copy for inclusion in its Archives, I need hardly say that I shall be delighted and honoured. But, in judging the story, it should be remembered that it was written mainly to interest and inform my family, present and future.

Walton-on-Thames *Edward F. Oaten*

All times I have enjoyed
Greatly, have suffered greatly. . . . . . .
Much have I seen and known, cities of men,
And manners, climates, councils, governments.

Tennyson : "Ulysses".

Well remembering that caution of the poet,
"Turpe mihi abire domo vacuumque redire",
I have as my greatest adventure thought fit
to expose to view these observations.

Sir Thomas Herbert.

CENTRE OF SOUTH ASIAN STUDIES

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I was very glad that Dr Subal Ganguly has been able to publish the late Professor E F Oaten's memoir, and that Mrs Oaten has given him permission to do so. I am gratified, too, that the Centre of South Asian Studies in the University of Cambridge was able to help in associated researches. Original memoirs reveal clearly the links of friendship which have bound together the two countries of India and England for over 300 years in spite of the many differences and upheavals there have been. We have many such memoirs in the archive of the Centre of South Asian Studies, and in them may be found the reasons for and background to the affection and regard that subsists between our two countries.

B H FARMER
Director

EDITOR'S NOTE

Every big work has usually a small beginning and so had this. Acting on a whisper from Prof. N.K. Basu (85), the retired Head of the Chemistry Department, B.N. College, Patna, who had studied in the Presidency College, Calcutta, as a pupil of Prof. Oaten (1884—1973), I wrote to the Cambridge University in September, 1980 for some materials on Subhas Chandra Bose and that is how the search started. Pat came a warm reply from Mr. B.H. Farmer, Director, Centre of South Asian Studies of the Cambridge University enclosing one chapter from Prof. Oaten's Memoir and in a few months the entire unpublished reminiscences came into my hand through the courtesy of the Centre of South Asian Studies of the Cambridge University.

In January 1981, Miss. Mary T. Thatcher, Archivist of the Centre, informed me that "At last I am able to write to you and tell you that I have discovered that Mrs. E. F. Oaten is still alive at 85. She tells me that the nephew of Subhas Chandra Bose visited her and her husband in 1973 shortly before Mr. Oaten died". Thereafter started my correspondence with Mrs Kathleen Oaten. Her letters, full of interest and excitement, reveal many hitherto unknown facts about Prof. Oaten who left India in 1928 for England.

"He came home on leave in 1928 and never went back to India. He was forced to divorce his first wife" writes Mrs. Kathleen Oaten, who was married to the Professor in 1931. "My husband and I had a daughter Diana in 1937 who is married to a Bank Manager and has two children", she says. Prof. Oaten joined the Middle Temple as a Barrister in 1932. "Becoming a Barrister is expensive but law was my husband's first love" observes Mrs. Oaten. Prof. Oaten had great interest in genealogy and wrote a history of his family.

In his last years, Prof. Oaten had lost his eye-sight. Mrs. Oaten used to write for him to many friends and Indian correspondents; she took over driving. "I am still driving a Mini at 86" she tells me. "After his eyes failed, he walked the dog and listened to Radio recording on tape done for the blind" recalls Mrs. Oaten. "The brief candle" went out in March, 1973.

A much-discussed, much-remembered man in India, Prof. Oaten's name in India is chiefly linked with that of Subhas Bose, the incident relating to Netaji Subhas in the Presidency College in 1916 has been explained in great detail in Chater four of the Memoir by Prof. Oaten. Here, for the first time, we come to know the version and views of the learned Professor; elsewhere in his "Song of Aton and other Verses" (1967), the Professor has, in a poem admired Subhas Bose for his flaming patriotism; compared him with the Greek legendary hero Icarus :—

"Let me recall but this,
That while as yet the Raj that once you
challenged in your land,
Was mighty, Icarus-like,
Your courage planned to meet the skies,
and storm in battle set
the ramparts of high Heaven"

In Chapter four of his Memoir, Prof. Oaten also hailed Subhas Bose as "a young idealist of 19".

Many articles, editorials, books, letters have been published about Prof. Oaten since 1916; I don't know if the controversy will end with this publication. At one time the word "Oatenization" was widely used. Writing to an Indian pupil, Prof. Oaten said "If there is a word 'Oatenization' which means apparently the assaulting of Professors, I do not think it speaks well for Bengali Higher education that such a word is needed at all." (*Desh*, Bengali Weekly, 5.9.81) Recent references to Prof. Oaten appear in the article "Professor who made a verb" by Krishna Bose, *The Statesman*, 31 October 1971; Sisir Bose, "Netaji and India's freedom" 1975; D.P. Dass, "Rabindra Nath Tagore and E.F. Oaten" *Quest*, Nov-Dec. 1972; D. N. Banerjee, "What led to Oatenization in Presidency

College, Calcutta" *Modern Review* Nov. 1972, besides many other research articles in Bengali and English.

Whatever might have been his past in India, Prof. Oaten was deeply fond of India and his Indian pupils. He had learnt Bengali from one of his students Promatha Nath Banerjee with whom he used to correspond in Bengali. He had mastered Urdu language too. "He had a great love of India and up to the date of his death, had many Indian correspondents, some of them former pupils. We were always pleased to see Indians who were on holiday or working in England," thus writes Mrs. Kathleen Oaten in a letter of 2nd April, 1982.

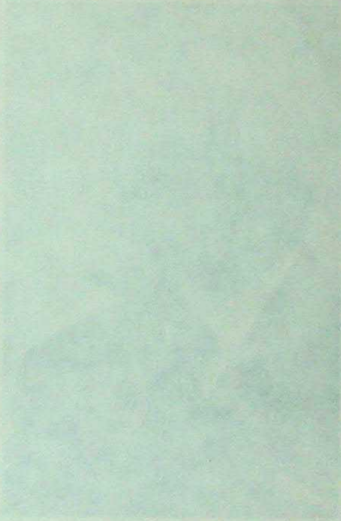
"My Memories of India" is sure to raise mixed reactions. To the extremist, the Prof.'s version of Netaji incident will appear as an attempt at self-defence; to the unbiased, it will appear a delightful historical narrative. But Prof. Oaten need not be identified with Netaji Bose only. My sole desire to bring into light the late Prof.'s Memoir is to tell the Indian readers how a young British scholar of Indian history had surveyed and studied the turbulent days in India from 1909-1928; what were his realisations in course of his stay in India, and how gradually from a die-hard imperialist he had changed into an admirer of India and the Indians. "My Memories of India" lifts Prof. Oaten far above the narrow frame of reference; the incident with Netaji Bose was only a fragment in the totality of his perceptions; his experiences in Bengal, in Afghanistan, in the Punjab and various parts of the country tell the readers how a sensitive mind had reacted to the contemporary situation and how the course of his thinking was influenced by the events all around him.

I am grateful to many, but special reference must be made to the celebrated Satyajit Ray for his suggestions; to Union Finance Minister, Shri Pranab Mukherjee, for his admiration and glowing observations, to Sri L.K. Jha, Chairman, Economic Reforms Commission, for his brilliant opinion, Bihar's Chief Minister, Dr. Jagannath Mishra for his unstinted praise and support, Shri Abheek Sarkar, Managing Director, Ananda Bazar Group of publications who was the first to come forward on his own to undertake the Bengali publication ; Shri Asoke

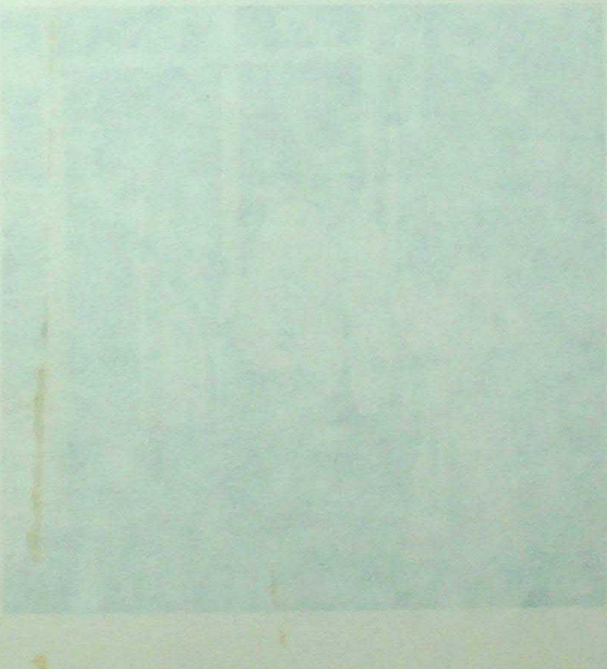
Sen, M.P. and Dr.Karan Singh, M.P., who read the manuscript in a Patna hotel and offered me guidance, to Sri A.K. Mazumdar, Secretary, Govt, of India, for his advice and to Sri Ram Brit Singh and Nand Kishore Singh, Proprietors of Janaki Prakashan, but for whose help the manuscript would not have seen the light of the day. My acknowledgement to Mrs. Oaten for sending me the rare photographs, many newsworthy letters, and permission to publish the Memoir, to the Centre of South Asian Studies (Cambridge University) for handing over the manuscript; to Mr. B.H. Farmer, Director, South Asian Studies for the nice introduction, and to Miss T.M. Thatcher of the Centre of South Asian Studies who helped me ceaselessly. Since I had no access to the final proof which was printed in New Delhi, printing errors, if any, may be excused. For some reasons beyond my control, I could not do full justice to my job which may be forgiven.

My labour will be amply rewarded if the readers welcome the Memoirs of Prof. Oaten.

Patna *Subal Ganguly*



[illegible], married, in January 1973,
shortly before his death



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In Survey, England, in January 1973, shortly before his death.

Prof. and Mrs. Kathleen Oaten at their residence at Walton-on-Thames, Survey in 1972.

1

FIRST YEARS IN INDIA : EARLY IMPRESSIONS OF CALCUTTA

Philip Gueadalla says, in his Life of the Duke of Wellington, that the only repartee to Indian reminiscenses is silence. I shall not allow fear of that fate to deter me.

My life in India was, like Ancient Gaul, divided into three parts.

1. 18th October 1909—15th September, 1916. Professor of History, Presidency College, as a member of the Indian Educational Service, in Calcutta, Bengal. (In Indian usage, the term Professor does not necessarily mean the holder of a Chair).

2. 16th September 1916—30th March 1919. Service in Probyn's Horse in the Punjab and in the North West Frontier Province, mainly at Dera Ismail Khan and Jullunder, and in the Central Provinces at the Saugor Staff Training College.

3. 1st April 1919—1930 (last two years on leave). Resumed service in the Indian Educational Service in various capacities as College Principal, Assistant Director of Public Instruction, and Director of Public Instruction, including service as Member of the Bengal Legislative Council, Member of the Senate and of the Syndicate of the University of Calcutta, and (concurrently part of the time) Major Commanding the 2nd (Calcutta) University Auxiliary Battalion.

I was appointed by the Secretary of State for India in the summer of 1909, after he had taken the precaution of getting one of his officials to read the two books which I had written on Indian subjects, "Anglo-Indian Literature" and "European Travellers in India." Before I left for India, I had lunch with a well-known left wing M.P., Rutherford. He had pronounced views on the Indian political problem, and I remember asking him when he thought the Indian problem would boil up to a crisis.

"The crisis is on now" he said in a manner calculated to frighten off a budding recruit to the Indian Service. But I had no nerves in those days. I was full of excitement and prepared for anything.

Those were leisurely days, and I set out for Calcutta by the all sea route from the Royal Albert Dock on the P. & O. S/s Simla, on the 18th of September 1909. I kept a full diary of the voyage, which I need not inflict upon the reader. I will permit myself one exception perhaps. There was the usual heterogeneous collection of types on board, including a number of young ladies going out in search of husbands. A delightful young lady, who was good enough to read my second book, was asked, by someone, after I had expatiated on the history of the so-called "fishing fleet" in the early days of British settlement, "Are you also in quest?" "No", she said sweetly, "in request!" She was engaged to a man in Madras. I think I ought to mention that the first-class fare in those days was £46, which was borne by the Secretary of State. The journey lasted just over a full calendar month. I will add that there was the inevitable colonel who advised us: "Fear no man and do right: fear all women and don't write !"

T.S. Sterling, who was to be a future colleague of mine as Professor of English and was on board, got hold somehow of a boat, when we came to a stop off Calcutta near jetty No. 4, and, whether by design or accident, signed on before I did, thereby gaining a bit of seniority. However, it had no significance in the long run. I landed in due course, and drove through the business quarter of Calcutta, past most imposing business houses, thrilled by the name Clive street, and by the proximity of the site of the Black Hole, to the Grand Hotel. Offices were closed (or undermanned) for the Puja holidays, and anyone who was anybody was away in the Hills, but a pleasant and as I found out later very capable Eurasian (Anglo-Indian) member of the Provincial service named Stark had been deputed to greet me on arrival. I was a bit peeved that no pure blooded Englishman had been deputed to see me into India, but I got over this feeling when I got to know Stark better, and when I realised that everybody who can possibly do so leaves Calcutta in October, the month of dengue fever, and the month in which one hundred years previously half the English inhabitants used to be ill or die. Incidentally, Sterling went down very soon after arrival, and I had to visit him in the Presidency Hospital.

Sterling and I very soon got accommodation at 10 Middleton Row, a boarding house somewhere off South Chowringhi, in a street presumably named after a former bishop of Calcutta. By the way, I often wonder to what extent all these old familiar names have been changed to Indian names since 1947. The process had begun even before freedom, under the nationalistic fervour of the Calcutta Corporation, and no doubt many of the old familiar landmarks have been obliterated and forgotten, overlaid by the names of local worthies. Much history has doubtless been hidden by the new names.

My salary was 500 rupees a month, which at the rate of 15 rupees to the £1, equalled £400 a year. Taxation fortunately was minimal. My salary increased by annual increments of 100 rupees a month, I seem to remember. Our room and board cost 180 rupees a month, which left a reasonable surplus for other expenses, and made available what in England would have been regarded as luxury. In retrospect, I am amazed at the quite wonderful life which this salary, which would now be regarded as derisory, opened up to me. A personal valet was the first requisite, called a bearer, and I was soon addressing him in Hindustani, chiefly in imperatives. One shared the services of a sweeper or mehtar. It took a little time to get used to the services of this menial, whose life was occupied in clearing out of pots and disposing of human excrement, who coughed discreetly before entering the smallest room in the house, who was often addressed as Maharajah, and of whom a later poet has written: "At least his life was devoted to the Fundamental." It took also a day or so to learn that one must not get into the large pots of water which loomed large in the bathroom, but must throw the water over one's nude form, rejoicing in the fact that it was cold. I speedily got used to having my clothes neatly laid out for me on the bed, and to lying back on it to allow my socks to be slipped on as if by magic. Putting on socks is in youth not such an arduous task as it is in old age, but I rejoiced in this little bit of luxury, especially when it was hot.

One of the absurd things that we newcomers to Calcutta had to do was to procure a black morning coat and top hat, and go round the city calling on everyone one should call on. It was an absurd businses. One procured a gharry or carriage, got into it wearing a topee, or sun hat, went to the house where a call was to be made, sent in two cards, if the callee was married, and then, if he or she was receiving, left the topee in the carriage, donned the topper, and marched in. I remember calling in this way on Sir Denison Ross and Lady Ross at the Calcutta Madrasah. Some people economised time and effort by sending their bearers to put cards in the calling boxes which most people had outside their houses, but the system broke down on one occasion when a lazy bearer is said to have dumped all the cards in one box. T.S. Sterling called on one Indian gentleman, and sent in the two cards in ordinary way. He was received in an enormous library, and a rather forbidding voice said: "You sent in two cards!" "That's the custom, isn't it ?" replied Sterling cheerfully. "I am not married" was the crushing reply. This sort of stupidity went out a few years after I arrived in Calcutta. One man, Wordsworth, showed the independence of mind which afterwards characterised him in the service and on the Editorial staff of the "Statesman" by refusing from the first to conform to the custom. He insisted on wearing ordinary clothes when calling.

An incident which has remained in my mind happened one evening in 10 Middleton Row. Sterling and I were dining at one of the tables when a high official of the East Indian Railway, named Dring, did us the courtesy of sending over his bottle of port and inviting us to fill our glasses. It was a simple act of kindness, which might otherwise have been forgotten, but it was remembered because a few weeks later he fell from an observation car on his own railway, somewhere between Calcutta and Patna, I think, and was killed.

As the College did not start work till 16th November, I had plenty of time to look around me. I dined with E.P. Harrison at the Observatory. Harrison was Professor of Physics, at the Presidency College, with Jagadis Bose, later Sir Jagadis Bose, F.R.S., as a colleague in the same subject. Harrison was the official meteorologist, and as such had a charming house at the Observatory. It was situated off Duel Avenue, so named from the duel which Warren Hastings and Sir Philip Francis fought near here in 1780 when Hastings put a bullet into Francis, and so got rid of him as an opponent of his Indian policy. Francis had his revenge in the seven years torture of Hastings' impeachment before the Lords until at long last acquitted but ruined he left a free man, and lived to see the House rise, when, as an old man, he visited it, to accord him much delayed honour. Duel Avenue was situated in Alipore, not far from Belvedere, the home of the Lt. Governor of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, prior to the great changes announced by the King, George V, in 1911, at Delhi.

I will here quote from my diary. "Correct Bengali costume in the middle walks of life seems to be a kind of loose flowing trousers, which come down to the calf, and a shirt, often an English starch-fronted one, with the tail worn outside." Closer observation made me realise that the nether garment is not a trouser at all, but a long piece of white linen cloth wound round the legs and tucked between them and round the waist to form a cool garment for the lower part of the body which can be detached in a moment and quickly washed and dried. It is a very suitable garment for hot weather, loose without buttons, and were the upper garment in keeping, (instead of it being a shirt, as it often is,) it could have an effect of some dignity. But generally the shirt spoils the effect. These remarks apply to the situation as I saw it in 1909. Khaddar has had a great effect on Bengali clothing, and the position now may be very different. After a while I discovered that this kind of loose costume was mainly used by Hindus, and that one could generally distinguish a Muslim by the fact that he wore trousers and some sort of coat. Really upper class folk pleased themselves and were not confined to one style. These of course were my first impressions.

One sight which I had to get used to was the carrying of a corpse through the streets for burning or burial, borne on a portable bed on the shoulders of men, for all to see. It was a disagreeable novelty after the sophisticated coffin and hearse treatment in the West. It made one realise that one had entered a community which was so poor that it could not afford what are considered elsewhere the elementary decencies of death. I had yet to learn that neither could it afford the elementary decencies of life. I got an inkling when I first heard the sound of hawking and spitting in the morning by men, who had slept on the pavement outside the Grand Hotel, soon after my arrival. Unfortunately, one soon became accustomed to the universal poverty around one. It was so evident that not much could be done about it.

I walked about the city. I saw Bengali footballers playing on the Maidan or City Park in bare feet, and playing well, often against British regimental teams in boots, whom they often beat. I wandered up Chowringhi, and near the office of the Calcutta Statesman, the seven day a week daily, skirted gingerly around Brahmani bulls, who must be respected. I was taken into the Bengal Club, (which is built on the site of Macaulay's mansion of 1837), that exclusive organisation mainly for important business men, which I could not hope or afford to join until I was a burra sahib myself. I was cheered to see, displayed among the new books recently acquired by the club, my second book "European Travellers in India." This and my other book constituted quite a useful introduction for me to India. I remember that when at Columbo a certain Mr. Welby had come on board to greet the bride whom I mentioned earlier in this narrative, there was time for a brief introduction, and in conversation with me he informed me that he also had read it. I was not wholly surprised, for the reviews had been good, the one in the "Spectator" having been particularly favourable. It even starred the book on its printed display bill, which were customary in those spacious days outside newsagents' shops. I think the Spectator liked the book because in dealing with Bernier's travels, I had stressed his condemnation of public ownership of land as being the cause of the downfall of the Mogul Empire. This suited that journal's politics. Sir George Birdwood had written me a charming letter, saying: "A book after my own heart", and that he had bought four copies as prizes.

In short, I was fascinated by everything I saw or experienced. I had come to India with a pretty good background of knowledge of its history and I had made a beginning of getting to know the people and of visiting the places of which I had read.

I took two steps in those early days which brought much interest and indeed happiness into my life. I became a Trooper in the Calcutta Light Horse and I joined the Concordia Lodge of Freemasons, 3102 English Constitution.

I joined the Regiment for two reasons. Most of us sensed in our bones that real trouble was coming in Europe, and that it behoved every Briton, especially one serving in such an exposed country as India, to get some sort of military training. But an additional reason was that membership of the Regiment enabled one to keep a horse more cheaply. One had to buy it oneself, but received some assistance towards its upkeep. This was useful as a separate groom or syce had to be kept as well as food and accommodation provided. That meant that one always had a horse available for a daily ride. Parades, cross country rides and the occasional camps were great fun. I remember that the Colonel when I first joined had a Greek name that readily lent itself to ribaldry. I can still in memory hear the sound of ribald songs echoing from a tent, of which the chorus sounded like "Squarey Ass, Squarey Ass." And the memory still remains with me of an occasion when the order "Charge!" was given, when all our horses, which were inevitably of different types and speeds and controllability, dashed forward, and many of us ended some thirty yards in front of Erskine Crum, our Squadron Leader, who was left wildly gesticulating in the rear. One of our Squadron Leaders was Eric Studd, later Sir Eric, who was a business man in Calcutta.

When I first joined, it was the appalling custom for a Trooper to ride through the streets on his charger, accompanied by a syce, who carried his rifle for him! This practice was quite properly stopped by Army instruction on the outbreak of the First World War. I remember that when the order stopping the practice was issued, a newspaper, the Statesman, I think, mentioned a parallel to this practice which was as old as the Napoleonic Wars. There was a Volunteer Corps in Calcutta then, and the luxurious members of the Corps walked or rode to the Parade accompanied by a servant who carried a brick or for his master, to stand on so that he would not get his bricks feet wet at drill, when the weather was inclement.

As we are talking of horses this seems the appropriate place in which to tell a story which really belongs to a later date in my Indian life. When I worked in Writers' Buildings in an administrative capacity a communication came from Simla in which the War Office there intimated that the Department had a surplus of horses in the hot weather when manoeuvres could not take place, and that responsible civilians would be allowed to keep and ride them provided they maintained them and insured their lives. It was customary for letters to be put up to me for a decision after annotation by a clerk suggesting a course of action. It was apparently decided in the office that this letter should be put up to me annotated by my personal Madrasi stenographer, since he had served in Mesopotamia as a soldier clerk, and presumably knew something about military matters, which were beyond the ordinary Bengali clerk. He noted:

"The Army Department have not made this matter clear. The Department has not stated whether these horses are mares, geldings or stallions. Should they turn out to be stallions, the civilians receiving them might let them out for unauthorised coverings, in which case they would be unfit for use on mobilisation. I advise referring this matter back for further information."

I had a good laugh as I noted on the file. "Circulate to all members of the service."

My service with the Calcutta Light Horse was a useful experience. When the War broke out in 1914, strict orders were given to all English service personnel that only selected men who could be spared would be released for service in the Army. Simla or London thought that it would be dangerous to reduce the already thin English cadres in the various services. One member of the Educational Service refused to accept this ruling. His name was Maclear. He carried his insistence so far, threatening resignation, that Lord Carmichael gave him a personal hearing. As a result he was released, but unfortunately was soon killed in Mesopotamia.

I served in the Calcutta Light Horse from 1911 to 1916. Then when the Presidency College disturbances of 1916 were well over, of which more will be heard later in this narrative, it was decided in high places that I should be released. I accepted the offer with relief. My previous experience as a Trooper helped me to get a commission in a delightful and famous regiment, the XIth King Edward's Own Lancers (Probyn's Horse) which was raised by Dighton Probyn, later Queen Alexandra's Secretary, at the time of the Mutiny. One heard stories of extraordinary snobbery in some infantry regiments, where some officers who came to them as temporary members of the Indian Reserve of Officers were regarded as "temporary gentlemen". There was none of that in Probyn's Horse, in which I spent two and a half very happy years. But that story will be told later.

I also joined Lodge Concordia No. 3102 in the English Constitution, which in those days was the Lodge which most British higher Government servants chose for the purpose of practicing the craft. I had already been initiated in my father's lodge, Holmesdale, 874 in the English Constitution, which worked at Tunbridge Wells, Kent, so no initiation ceremony was required. As I was initiated in December, 1906, it follows that I am now a Freemason of 61 years standing, which is a record which few exceed. Prior to joining "Concordia", I had been told a story which was kept secret at the time, but which later on as Secretary of the Lodge I verified from the books of the Lodge, and which is now well known in Masonic circles. The story was this. In 1906 the Amir of Afghanistan, Habibullah Khan, was a state guest of the Viceroy Lord

Minto, at Government House, Calcutta. Lord Kitchener and other Freemasons in the Government circle thought it would be a good idea to give him the honour of initiation into Freemasonry, for political reasons. This was not an absolute innovation, as in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries ruling Indian princes had occasionally, though I think rarely been accorded this sort of honour. Lodge Concordia was chosen as the venue for the ceremony. Lord Kitchener was present as was Sir Henry McMahon and other famous folk. Sir Henry translated the English Ceremony into Pushtu as it went along. A.W. Dentith of the I.C.S., whom I met frequently in later years in London as a member of the Old Alleynian Lodge (the lodge of Dulwich School) was Worshipful Master at the time, and conducted the ceremony. Freemasons will understand what I imply when I say that by special dispensation of the Duke of Connaught, Grand Master of the United Grand Lodge of England, three ceremonies were compressed into one, very much compressed in fact owing to the exigencies of time. W.A. Prentice of the I.C.S. worked one of the minor offices in the ceremony for a time, and many years later I settled a bet between him and another member in the United Service Club as to which of the two had performed that office. Neither of them won the bet, as I was able to prove from the books that each of them had worked the office for part of the ceremony.

Freemasonry was very popular in Calcutta, and it was said that a man who had enough friends in the craft could attend a meeting almost every weekday in the month if he wished. Freemasons' Hall in Park Street was an admirable centre for the craft, and English, Scotch and Irish Constitutions worked there in harmony. Calcutta Freemasonry as I knew it had one or two characteristics which have disappeared for ever both in England and India. In my Lodge the annual subscription was, I think, 150 rupees a year. In return for this the member had eleven ceremonies followed by eleven dinners, and good ones at that, drinks included, to which on notice to the Secretary he could invite any number of guests without extra charge. In addition, there was a free bar just outside the Lodge room, on the right as one entered, to which

I have known the Secretary and others, at a convenient break in the ceremonies, pop out on thirsty evenings, as most of them were.

Freemasonry in India is almost as old as Freemasonry in England. Grand Lodge in England granted Bengal a Provincial Grand Lodge as early as 1731. George Pomfret was authorised by Grand Lodge to open a Lodge in Bengal in 1729, and Captain Ralph Fairwinter was two years later made Provincial Grand Master for India. In 1866 the "Provinces" were renamed "Districts".

To complete the story of the Amir, I may add that the Amir returned to Afghanistan, and left behind a silver cup which adorned and presumably still adorns the dining table of the Lodge. It has been said that the honour helped to keep the Amir politically well disposed to the Raj till his death. In 1918 I had the melancholy duty of entering against the Amir's name in the books of the Lodge the word "Murdered". I was Secretary at the time. Amanullah came to the throne.

As I have anticipated my story so far, I will anticipate further and add that I became Worshipful Master of the Lodge in 1924.

Freemasonry was in my opinion a great solvent between British and Indian within a limited sphere. One visited purely Indian lodges, and met socially Indians in the Lodge, and at the festive table all (and they were a good many) who were willing to eat with Britons. I do not wish to exaggerate, but I regard Freemasonry as one of the three agencies among others which helped to bring Indians and Englishmen into friendly social intercourse, the other two being within their respective spheres cricket and polo.

Experience of Freemasonry added much to the interest of reading Kipling. He was a very poor practicing Freemason, but he put a great deal of the craft into his work. "Here's to the Lodge of the Widow" and "Serjeant, Sir, Salute Salaam, Inside Brother, and it doesn't do no harm" and numerous other passages come to mind. I was very glad that when I read Kipling, and went to see his India, I was previously a Freemason. On the frontier I once saw a General and a Serjeant Major......but that's another story to be told later on.

It was in this preliminary period of my life in India that I went through the ritual of being "Presented at Court". We were informed on arrival that that was the thing to do, if one wished to be socially recognised. Lord Minto was Viceroy, and it was to him that we made our bow. I don't think it made a ha'porth of difference to me socially, especially as the Viceroy and the capital were whisked to Delhi when George Vth came to India in 1911. The whole procedure was grotesque. We were told that we academics should wear academic dress, so we turned up at Government House in cap, gown and hood. We were slowly shepherded with others from pen to pen on our way to the Throne Room, where the Viceroy awaited us. Each pen was guarded by a huge scarlet robed Pathan of the Bodyguard. The pens were uncomfortably full, and as every one was bored with the slow progress and long waits, there was much pushing and shoving to get to the front of the pen. I believe in some cases gowns were torn, and some social aspirants arrived at the Throne Room dishevelled and hot. There came a time many years later when owing to my position in the official hierarchy I had the private entry and as a result stood behind the Governor of Bengal and had the supreme felicity of watching others make their bows. But at that time there was nothing like the unseemly crushing and shoving which I experienced on my way to the Viceroy's Throne Room. What the Pathans who stood on guard at the pens and watched the struggles and shovings of the incomprehensible "sahibs" thought of the whole thing I have never dared to think.

It was in 1911 that I had the pleasure of seeing King George and Queen Mary in Calcutta. The visit of their Majesties has been told in detail in history books, and I need not do more than mention a few episodes. When the King and Queen left the Calcutta Maidan to depart, I saw the unforgettable sight of thousands of Bengalis and others swarming across the Maidan to prostrate themselves before the chair in which the King had sat. Monarchy still meant much to the Indian in 1911. The politicians capitalised on this sentiment in making the momentous announcement of the change of capital and the alteration of the boundaries of Bengal and other provinces proceed from the lips of the Monarch. And mention of the changes in Bengal, which re-united Bengal and Eastern Bengal (now East Pakistan) reminds me of a meeting which I had with Mr. P. Banerji, brother of Sir Surendra Nath Banerji, the politician who had campaigned so energetically against the severance of the two Bengals. He said: "I warned my brother over and over again that if he won his campaign to get Eastern Bengal back into Bengal, he would rue the day. Now see the result. What he won on the swings he has lost on the roundabouts. He has gained Eastern Bengal, but he has lost Bihar, and the capital is no longer in Bengal, which has lost status and power immensely. Power now goes to Upper India, and Bengalis will no longer be able to influence the Central Government." And of course in the final result, Eastern Bengal was lost by Bengal to Pakistan, and West Bengal is now only a truncated shadow of its former self. Mr. P. Banerji was right, though I doubt whether even he foresaw the end result of his brother's "victory."

I must include here also a story of 1911. When their Majesties came to Calcutta, I was invitied to a garden party at Government House "to meet their Majesties." This was probably one of the few results of my struggles through the pens to make my bow before Lord Minto, which I have already mentioned. I duly attended. Needless to say, I did not "meet their Majesties." I was too humble in the hierarchy for that. When tea-time came, their Majesties retired into a large tent. I was strolling the grounds with an Indian friend of mine, and found him edging all he could towards the entrance to the tent, where he stopped and gazed. "Come along", I said "Let's move on." "No", he replied, "I've never seen a king have his tea before, and I'm not going to miss the chance." A classic instance, perhaps, of the Hindu rite of "darshan". Much merit in the Hindu view, can be derived from gazing at the monarch.

In my early years I remember that I visited a Buddhist shrine which contained an image of the Buddha. Offerings of food were to be seen at its base. The temple guardian spoke English. "What happens to the food offerings?" I asked.

"Well" he said, "they are left all night before the image, and what isn't eaten by the morning is my property!"

Still on the subject of religion, I remember that in my early years the priests at the Kalighat Temple, on the road towards Tollyganj, welcomed English visitors. They willingly allowed one to peer into the inner shrine where in semi-darkness sat the image of Kali. And they were quite pleased to allow one to see the sacrifice of the goats which were brought as religious offerings to the shrine. The sacrifice was performed with a single stroke of a knife or small axe. It was quite the thing to take guests from Europe to the Temple as one of the sights of Calcutta. Later on the temple authorities became less keen to expose to all and sundry the somewhat gruesome sacrificial rites.

I found the newspapers, especially the Bengali newspapers printed in English, very amusing reading at times. The often quaint turn of phrase, and the novel points of view were an endless source of interest. I remember once a criticism of Government for some measures against food shortage. "Why does the Government not pray to the god Barun for rain, which would soon end the trouble?" The marriage advertisements were diverting. "Wanted for a Brahmin youngman (sic) (giving some further details of his family and clan) a bride. Must be very fair. Dowry required Rs.— —." Then there was the report of a progress by the Governor of the Province to some town, Rajshahi, I believe. Petitions were handed in to him. One of them began, as reported, "We, the prostitutes of this town, beg to invite the attention of your Excellency to the following grievances, under which we are suffering." Finally, there was an announcement in the "Statesman" in its obituary column, which has remained firmly in my mind. Mary Ann Williams, died 11th February, 1911. "Safe in the arms of Jesus". (Inserted by her daughter).

There was never a dull moment in my first years in India. Every day there was something to divert.

Finally, a general word as to the climate. I knew what to expect, namely, in Macaulay's phrase to be annually baked for four months, boiled for four months, and allowed four months to become cool if we could. I was grateful that we were allowed to begin with the cooling months, and very pleasant I found them, especially when on cold nights a fire, not really necessary, but comforting, could be lit. I was very lucky as to health. In the whole of my service in different parts of India, the damp dank heat of Bengal, the dry heat of the N.W.F.P., the Panjab, and Central India, I never had malaria, never dengue fever, and the only inconveniences I ever suffered which stopped me in my tracks were a dose of jaundice in Calcutta, and (in the North-West) very bad prickly heat which only a visit to Simla ended.

2

AT THE PRESIDENCY COLLEGE—1
(1909-1914)

A few days after I arrived in Calcutta, I discharged the duty of calling on the Acting Principal of the College. He was acting Principal, pending the return of Mr. H.R. James. I was told that his name was Mr. H.M. Percival. It was quite a shock when, on my admission to his presence, a black hand shot out to greet me, and I looked into a black countenance. No one had warned me that Percival for all his English sounding name was an Indian, of what caste or creed, if I ever knew, I have forgotten. Any way, after the initial shock, the incident was a good introduction to the extremely mixed academic society into which I was about to enter.

I was to lecture on History. It was extremely varied History, including Ancient History, International Law, and English, Indian and European History. In due course Mr. Percival informed me that no one could take a University examination unless he had attended a minimum number of lectures in the subject of the examination. I was informed that owing to the hitherto weakness of staff in History, lectures on the subject of the English period of Indian History were deplorably short. So would I give a certain class two one-hour lectures a day for at least a fortnight, to help the students catch up on the necessary number of lectures ? So there was I plunged into a vast ration of lectures on the trickiest and most controversial subject that could have been chosen, Warren Hastings, Nand Kumar, Philip Francis, Cheyt Singh, Impey, and all the rest of the men whose exploits or experiences can be twisted by hostile critics to prove that the English are a perfidious people.

The lecturers exhausted me : we had to go into such detail. My hearers stood the strain manfully: after all, they had to endure the strain to make up the necessary lectures. It did not matter what I said as long as I lectured. I expect they disagreed with my views on the subject, but they were very docile in 1909.

All lectures were in English. Presidency College was widely regarded as the Balliol of India. The students were proud to be at such a College, which had so many important professors, both Indian and European (pronounced with an emphasis on the letter 'O'). On the whole, in spite of some curious mannerisms such as European, the standard of English among the students was high, since all the best men put Presidency College as their first choice. The best lecturers, in the opinion of the students, were those who went slowly enough for the student to take down easily what they said. I tried other ways, talking fast for a while, and then dictating the gist to be taken down. This method was less popular, as it limited the possible stock of valuable notes. I discovered once that a course of lectures which I had delivered had been printed and was selling in the bazar.

The students came to us at about 16 and studied two years for the Intermediate qualification. They then studied a further two years for the Bachelor's degree. The reader will understand that Passed Intermediate Failed B.A. had some value in the market for jobs in that it proved that at least the applicant had studied for four years. A further two years course led on to the M.A. degree, or the corresponding scientific degrees.

The College had a soccer team, which played in bare feet, and inter alia, a cricket team, in which I frequently at this time played. When I played, it was under the authority of the student captain. Some of them were quite good players, but I was a pretty useful bat and I kept my end up with them. On one occasion we played a Calcutta (English) team. One Calcutta man was backing up too vigorously, and a College bowler stopped in his run, and ran him out. It is useful to warn a player before acting in this drastic fashion, and I apologised and asked the player to continue his innings. He declined and went to the pavilion. Our captain one year was J.S. Roy, nicknamed Kanu. Once when we were playing on the Maidan our side batted first, and Roy made 34. When the time came for us to field, Roy was nowhere to be seen and we had to get a substitute. Presently Roy turned up and took over. I said "Hullo, Kanu, where have you been ?" He replied cheerfully, "I am such a good bat that I am in great demand. I have been batting for another team, and as I made over 100 I took rather a long time about it." I was amused, but I thought I ought to teach him a lesson. "Well, I'm sorry, but as Vice-President of the Club I shall suspend you for a fortnight, for unsporting behaviour." He took it very well. He was really quite a nice chap. But there was a sequel. Next day, one of my favourite M.A. class students, Promatha Nath Banerji, a very promising student indeed, of whom we shall here much later, came up to me and said : "Sir, you were wrong to suspend Roy." "Why?", I said, "it's very unsports-manlike to play for two teams on one day". "Yes Sir, I agree, but when you suspended him, you were under his authority as Captain. You should have waited till the end of the game!" I replied laughingly : "By Jove, Promatha, you'll make a great name for yourself in the legal profession !" How my prophecy was fulfilled will be seen later in this narrative.

Presidency College was one of many which made up the University of Calcutta. It developed from the Hindu College or Maha Vidyalaya, which was founded on January 20th 1817. Lord Carmichael, the first Governor of the new Bengal, when he opened the new Baker Laboratories on the 20th of January, 1913, declared that that day should be kept in perpetuity as Founder's Day. I should observe that the College was a Government owned institution, staffed and maintained from Government funds. I had two types of teachers, those in the Indian Educational Service, mainly though not entirely English, and those in the Provincial Service, almost all Indian. The Indian Educational Service were all appointed by the Secretary of State, and were paid on a higher scale than the others.

I remember the Common Room of the College as a lively place. The Science professors were not seen there much. Dr. E.P. Harrison, Jagadis Chandra Bose, later J.C. Bose, F.R.S., and Sir P.C. Ray, the Professor of Chemistry and others preferred to spend most of their time in their laboratories. But we Arts people often had lively discussions on every subject under the sun. Often I had talks with Dr. Aditya Nath Mukherji a Professor of Philosophy on, for instance, cow reverence and Purdah. He tried to help me to understand cow reverence by asking me how I would react to killing or even eating a Derby winner (today he would have mentioned Arkle). He defended Purdah by saying that the Western practice which risked the occasional bastard birth in the general interest of the freedom of women would never do in a tropical country like India. Girls must be married before puberty. I remember Profulla Chandra Ghosh, the most extrovert Indian whom I ever met. He taught English. At the slightest hint of witticism he exploded in peals of laughter. The staff was large, and I cannot mention all of them. Sterling was also a pleasant extrovert, on the look out for humour. He told me once that one of his students, being asked in an examination to comment on the remark of an Irish M.P. "I smell a rat, I see it floating in the air, let us nip it in the bud", answered not "Mixed Metaphor", which would have got him good marks, but: "Rat should be mouse, for if you nip anything in the bud, it is small." Sterling later on became Secretary of the United Services Club in Calcutta, and later on still, Secretary of the Authors' Club in London. He was a Downing College, Cambridge man. R.N. Gilchrist taught English. He came from Aberdeen University. He wrote books, had a distinct flair for administration, and later on transferred to work in Writers' Buildings. In his early days he was asked by a student what authors he should model his style upon. "Gibbon, Macaulay and Carlyle", said Gilchrist. Heaven help the student if he took the advice! Then there was Holme from Liverpool University, who also taught English. I do not think he was happy, at the College, and some years later transferred to the non-Government post of Principal, La Martiniere School (a school for Anglo-Indians and Europeans). Langley came to the College a bit later, as Professor of Philosophy. Later he became Vice-Chancellor of the new University of Dacca. There was J.N. Das Gupta, a Balliol man, (I believe he had studied under Jowett), a capable man who researched into Bengal History. The chief drawback to conversation with him was that he *would* stand very close to one, so that one got his breath in one's face, and speak very softly. I must not forget W.C. Wordsworth, a very scholarly man. I think he taught English. He was an Oxford man. Later he was Assistant Director of Public Instruction, and in 1916, when Mr. H.R. James, the Principal of the College resigned, he became College Principal. In 1924 he resigned, because Dunn was appointed Director, a post which he thought he should have got, and became Assistant Editor of the "Statesman". Unfortunately he was to have a second disappointment, since he never became Editor. There was, I think, a certain lack of order and tidiness in his administrative work which let him down, and prevented the success which his great abilities really deserved. Wordworth will come into the story later.

I must not forget Professor S.C. Mahalanobis, on the science side, a capable scientist, but remembered chiefly for his remarkable name, and for his work in connection with the University Institute, a sort of Union Society or Club. Khagendra Nath Mitter, a very genial teacher of English, also did good work for the Society.

Muslims played a very small part in the life of the College, since Muslim education was backward in comparison with that of Hindus. But the College taught the languages associated with that religion, Persian, Arabic and Urdu, and there was a Muslim staff for this purpose. I remember there was Professor Hosain, who sometimes joined in our discussions in the Common Room on profound subjects. To this circle came a new religion and a new type towards the close of my time, Professor Zechariah. He came from South India, and was a Syrian Christian, of that religious body which traces its origin to a legendary visit of the apostle Thomas to India. He was an Oxford man, extremely capable, and a valuable addition to our Common Room which now had for its philosophical and religious discussions representatives of the Christian

(Syrian and Protestant), Muslim, Orthodox Hindu, and Brahmo Somaj religions. I don't think we had a Sikh. But we did have a Parsi (see below). Zechariah taught History for a while, but was before long switched away for administrative work.

Jehangir Cooverjee Coyagee, late Sir J.C. Coyagee, was a Bombay Parsi, and a Cambridge economist. He was a most capable man, who married a Wadia, of a well known Parsi family. They were very pleasant Anglicised folk. Later on he sat on the Royal Commission on the Rupee, and was knighted for his services. He was rather a bulky fellow, and he told me that once in his English lodgings he had entered his rooms in the dark, sat down heavily tired out, to be greeted with howls and then silence. He had deprived the cat of all her nine lives.

There must be other members of the staff of this distinguished College whom I ought to mention, but memory is fallible. But one of them, in some ways the most distinguished of all, though he never received recognition, I have kept till now, Mon Mohan Ghosh, the poet.

My attention was first drawn to him because it was his habit to open in the Common Room large parcels of quite wonderful books which he had ordered from England. It was a joy to see them as they were taken out of the packing. He must have spent much money on them.

He was a melancholy man, as poets often are. But he had a reason for melancholy. His brother Aurobindo Ghosh was a fugitive from justice in Pondicherry. He had allegedly been guilty of sedition, and I presume had done things which inculpated him. Mon Mohan appeared to have no anti-British bias. I asked him once why he differed so much from Aurobindo. He replied : "*His* genius went in the direction of politics. I'm interested only in literature and poetry." He was a likeable fellow. After his wife's death he became very melancholy. He was in many ways an unpractical man. There was a story abroad when I knew him that, having been allocated an examinership by the University he did not read the papers sent to him for marking, but gave marks according to weight. The results were puzzling, and the University had the papers re-marked. I do not vouch for the truth of this story, but it was current in my time. But I prefer to dwell on the greatness of the man as a poet, the nobility of his devotion to England, despite the fate of his brother, and his kindly and gentle disposition. I may be permitted to quote three stanzas of the nine stanza poem which he contributed to the Presidency College Magazine in the very autumn of England's agony at Passchendale.

Britannia the fair
    Whom oceans girdle round,
    With hill and valley crowned,
And purest wash of air
    From her Atlantic bound.
What heaths so fresh as hers
With blossom ? and how stirs
    The soft wind in her pines.
Earth's fairest isle, 'tis said,
    Where all things lovely are,
Yet beauty there not mines
    Strength; for no cliff is there,
    No headland calmly fair,
But fringed with wild sprays wed
    To shout Britannia.

Britannia the heart
    And brain that bulwarks power;
    See, at the crucial hour
How well she bears her part !
    From fields how peaceful flower
In million arms and men !
Which now she pours again
    To those old battlefields
France, Flanders; makes her star
    Of glory that she shields
The weak, confronts the strong.
    Brute force let others sing,
    She shows in everything
To her it shall belong
    To be......Britannia.

Acc. No:..............
Cost:..............
Date:..............

Britannia sublime
    To flame in generous deed;
    In others' cause to bleed
So to the end of time
    It shall be. Once she freed
The Iberian, Wellington
And Torres Vedras spun
    The lines of victory then.
Another Trafalgar
    The bleak North seas await,
Where her fleet towers the main
    Each mighty battleship
    Charged to the very lip
With thunder. Big with fate
    They loom Britannia.

I find that after all I have omitted mention of a few names which cannot be omitted in this survey. There was Dr. Cullis, the mathematician. He was reputed to be very learned in his subject. He was somewhat old, reserved and retiring when I knew him, and we saw little of him in the Common Room. Then there was C.W. Peake, who was one of the senior members of the Staff when I arrived. He was on the science side of the College. I believe he was, like the Director of Public Instruction at the time of my arrival, Kuchler, allied by marriage with the Knight family, which owned, or had owned, the "Statesman". He was pleasant and genial. I believe that he lived after retirement to England to an immense age.

Finally I must not forget Dr. Probhu Dutt Shastri, a Punjabi, who was appointed to the Indian Educational Service as a Professor of Philosophy towards the end of my time at the College. I don't think he was entirely happy at the College. After all, he was in a sense a foreigner in Bengal. He failed to recognise that membership of the upper branch of the service had obligations as well as privileges, when J.W. Holme got married and we had a whip round the I.E.S. for a wedding present. He declined to contribute. "You see", he said, "I am married, and cannot myself benefit from this excellent custom." Shastri, I believe, during the war went away as Secretary to the Maharajah of Alwar.

In those early days we had social relations with some of the Anglicised Bengalis. Sterling on one occasion called on a Bangali family, and was received by the adolescent daughter of the house. He found her studying Bengali for her University examination. She knew and spoke English perfectly, and said that Bengali was the one subject in which she was weak, and feared failure. There were a number of families, chiefly Brahmo Somaj families, in which that sort of thing was prevalent. Bengali had not yet been exalted by Tagore and Asutosh Mookherji into a language in which all should be proud to be proficient.

I occasionally dined with the faimly of Dr. P.K. Roy, a member of the Brahmo Somaj, which was a kind of reformed Hinduism common among Anglicised Bengalis, very similar to Unitarianism. They were very pleasant people. He was a retired Professor of Philosophy. He had a mentally retarded daughter who was about 17 when I knew them, who sat at dinner with us in the most natural and charming fashion. I was invited by the family to the Brahmo Somaj wedding of an elder daughter to a Scottish member of the Indian Civil Service. The parties sat on a raised platform in the house while someone, a priest or at any rate officiating as such, recited a ceremony in English. I remember that I was in the second row of the guests. In front of me were two very pretty Bengali maidens. At one point in the service, the "priest" said, addressing the bride, "Thou shalt not exceed him in things spiritual or in things temporal." One Bengali maiden in front of me whispered to the other : "Or in things physical".

I will now tell the story of how I assisted in the marriage of a high caste Brahmin. Towards the end of my time at the College, a young man in my M.A. Class approached me. His name was Jogesh Chandra Chakravarty, also a Brahmin. Some years later he became Registrar of the University. He said : "Sir, I wish to speak to you on a very delicate matter." "All right" I said, "I'm ready to listen." "Sir" he said, "I come to you on behalf of Promatha Nath Banerji, who, as you know is a member of your M.A. Class. "Yes", I said, "Tell me the story."

"Promatha Nath Banerji", he said "according to a contract made by his father, is shortly to marry the daughter of a petty judicial official. Promatha has however learnt that the daughter of Sir Asutosh Mookherji, the High Court Judge, and the Vice-Chancellor of the University, is available to him. His father however refused to contemplate breaking the contract, though his son has begged him to do so."

Jogesh went on. "Promatha begs you to help him in any way you can." My first reaction was one almost of horror, and I said to Jogesh : "How can I, an Englishman, possibly interfere in a Brahmin's marriage arrangements ?" "Oh, Sir, you can. If you would only see Promatha's father, and persuade him to change his mind." At last I said that if his father would be prepared to call on me, I would gladly see him, and discuss the matter with him, but of course I could make no promises. It must depend on what happened when I met the father. Jogesh departed, satisfied.

The old gentleman came, frank, urbane and pleasant. He told me that he had made a contract for his son to marry. It was of course made with the father of the intended bride. He thought he ought to abide by the contract, which was a very binding document. I thought a bit, and then said : "I and of course you are quite aware that the approach to an intended union between families is very different in your system from what it is in England. I am not saying that the results of your system are worse or better than those of ours, in which romance and the wishes of the parties play a part which they do not play in yours. But", I added, "you must remember this, that Promatha is now a highly educated young man. Though a good Brahmin, he has learnt something of the western way of looking at these matters, and he at least wishes to have some say in his choice of a partner for life. I realise that he has not selected the proposed lady for romantic reasons, for he quite likely has never seen her, but for reasons of personal advantage, and because he will be allied with a great and important family. In my views, he has a right, whatever his reasons, to have a great say in regard to his marriage. And after all, Sir Asutosh is a knight and a great man." The father took me up on that. "Having a knight for a father-in-law won't help him much." It was the father's last struggle. "No", I said, but having for your father-in law a High Court Judge, and a Vice-Chancellor of the Univerity, must be a help to one who is going to be a lawyer and a University lecturer, as Promatha hopes to be. You have two obligations in conflict, your obligation to carry out the contract, and your obligation to allow your son freedom of choice." The old gentleman thanked me and went away sadly, saying, "I will think it over and decide."

Well, in the end the contract was broken, and in due course I was invited to the wedding. Sir Asutosh Mookherji greeted me at the door, saying : "Ah ! come in, Mr. Oaten. I understand that you were the 'ghatak' in this matter." "Ghatak" is the Bengali for Marriage Arranger. Promatha had three sons and five children in all, I believe, before the lady was 21. I am not so sure that I should have worked so hard for him, had I known that lady in question was only 15. But that was all according to Bengali custom. And after all, in the middle ages 15 was a very common age for marriage in England. By the way, all the sons did well in life, one of them becoming Indian Commissioner for Trade in Canada and another getting a good business post on the executive of the Imperial Indian Tobacco Company. Promatha himself was very grateful to me for my help. He asked me to ride through the streets with him in his marriage procession, but said I should have to wear Bengali (Hindu) dress. I did not think I should look my best thus attired, and begged to be excused. But as I have said I went to the wedding ceremony.

This whole episode is typical of the good relations which existed in the Presidency College in the early days of my stay in India. Later agitators and "bad hats" changed things considerably, but I always remained on good terms with Promatha. Some 40 years later he wrote that he ascribed his successes in life—and they were considerable—all to me.

I would observe that I have not mentioned Mr. H. R. James at any length, as I am reserving comment on his work in and for the College till the chapter on the Presidency College disturbances of 1916. I am also conscious that I have dealt too briefly with the work in their laboratories of Sir P. C. Ray, and Sir Jagadis Chandra Bose. But their work was known then and later far beyond the precincts of the College, both in England and in America, and to describe it fully would have been beyond the scope of my intentions in writing this memoir.

I think however I have made it clear that we were a pretty strong team at the College. I may be allowed perhaps to conclude with a humorous tribute to Bose in the *New York Times* by way of illustration of his world wide fame. It is well known that Bose's main work was devoted to work on the sensitivity of plants, which have nervous impulses, and react to various anaesthetics and poisons. I quote two verses from a longer skit :

Be kind to the hypochondriacal plant,
Its nervous and ladylike qualms !
Its delicate frailty you surely must grant,
For it faints at all songs except psalms.
Be kind to the plants ! For a great botanist
Says their sensitiveness is intense.
They are shocked if a girl should chance to be kissed,
And will die at a moral offence.

I think it was during my first few years at the College that a Mr. Little began to throw a good deal of doubt on the current story of the Black Hole of Calcutta. Several years before Lord Curzon had re-erected a Memorial to the victims opposite the site of the tragedy. A debate was arranged in Calcutta at which I maintained the substantial historicity of the generally received story, and Mr. Monahan, an Irish member of the Indian Civil Service in Bengal, maintaind the opposite view. There were succeeding speakers, and altogether the debate attracted a good deal of publicity, and was printed in the local periodical "Bengal Past and Present". In a following issue there was printed a spirited defence of the current story from the pen of Lord Curzon in England, which ridiculed Mr. Little's arguments. In the end Bengal believed what it wanted to believe, and many years later the Black Hole Memorial disappeared from the scene for the second time. The story has also, I believe, disappeared from Indian textbooks.

3

TRAVELS
(1909-1915)

A very great attraction of a teaching post in the Indian Educational Service was the fact that Universities (in Bengal at least) closed from about the middle of April to early July. Pay went on monthly throughout the year. So one was free to travel anywhere, to England, if one so desired, or elsewhere. In my first vacation in 1910 I decided to see Australia. There was another vacation of one month in October-November, when the Puja or religious holidays took place.

The journey to Australia was made financially easy because cheap excursions were run by the P. & O. Line from Columbo to the Australian ports. A return fare from Columbo to Fremantle cost 190 Rupees, or less than £14. As one was kept in a floating hotel for twently days for this fare, it was indeed a bargain. If one went to Adelaide it was about 240 Rupees return.

I travelled to Columbo by train down the East coast of India. One changed trains at Madras, and I had time for a quick look at Madras. It appeared to be a very spacious city. On the way to Columbo I got out at Madura with a view to seeing the temples there. In the temple of Shiva I was shown many things, including erotic temple carvings. At the distance of time I can remember only one, a figure of a man carved in relief at the base of a pillar, with a male organ which wound round the pillar upwards until at the top it came to rest in the vagina of a female figure at the top. I was struck with admiration at the fine upstanding and often beautiful figures of the women whom one saw going about their daily work, most of them presumably of the lower castes or even outcasts.

The journey to Columbo occupies four days, and gave one an idea of the immensity of India. At last it was over, and I went on board ship for Fremantle. I regret that I have forgotten the name of the vessel.

I shall not chronicle in detail my tour through Australia. At Fremantle, in West Australia, which I had been told was a land of sin, sand, sorrow and sore eyes (how different today is the flourishing and rich state of Western Australia!). I met a son and grandchildren of my paternal grandfather's younger brother, Samuel Oaten, who after service in the forces (Somerset Light Infantry) for eleven years, including fighting in the Crimean War, had emigrated to the young land of Western Australia, in the eighteen seventies, with three children. I visited Adelaide, Melbourne, Ballarat, the Eureka Creek, Sydney, Botany Bay, Brisbane, Launceston and Hobart, the last two of course in Tasmania. Crossing Bass Strait I had a marvellous view of Halley's Comet, which blazed in the summer of 1910. The main purpose of my visit to Hobart was to see the total eclipse of the sun from the top of Mt. Wellington. I was lucky enough to get in touch with a party of amateur Australian astronomers, who made me free of their company. In due course on May 8 the sky grew dark, the birds stopped singing, and we peered through the gloom at the sun. Unfortunately clouds prevented a really satisfactory view of the eclipse, but even so I would not have missed the experience for anything. In the same week on May 6 King Edward VIIth died. The combination of Halley's Comet, a total eclipse of the sun, and the death of the monarch was too much for the local press and the clergy. Articles in the newspapers were written and even sermons preached on the lines of Shakespeare:

> When beggars die, there are no comets seen;
> The Heavens themselves proclaim the deaths of princes.

But before all these sermons and articles I like to remember most the simple piety and sorrow of a poorishly dressed woman whom I heard addressing this question in a Post Office to a clerk: "Is it true that our King is dead?" I wonder how many people would say "Our" and not "the" today. Times and fashions change.

I could write much of Australia. I am fortunate to have seen it so long ago, when men were constantly talking of its potentialities, so that now I can compare the present with those prognostications, and note how magnificently some of them have been realised, especially in Western Australia. I saw many things, from the orchards of Tasmania to the woolpacks of Brisbane, the stalagmites and stalactites and opussums of the Blue Mountains, the magnificence of Sydney Harbour, and the gold mines of Ballarat, where I mistook iron pyrites for the real thing. I will mention only two social contacts which I made. I was entertained in Sydney by a well-to-do manufacturer of paper bags, Matthews, who told me that at the start of his enterprise his sole stock in trade was a pair of scissors, paste, and some sheets of paper. Such were the possibilities of a young country. I also went to lunch with the Professor of History at Sydney University (his name was Storey). I was astonished to find that he had never heard of King Asoka, the great Buddhist Emperor of India, whose grandfather may have met Alexander the Great. But History is a subject in which a narrow specialism is almost universal, and in any case the very existence of Asoka had only been discovered or generally known a few years before I arrived in India.

I returned to India in time to begin work again at the College in early July. After the monsoon term was over, I proceeded on further travels. I was very anxious to see at close quarters the great cities of Northern India, and in particular the Mutiny cities of Lucknow, Cawnpore and Delhi. First of all, I went direct by train to Simla.

I reached Simla on the 9th October, 1910. The journey up the famous mountain railway with its century of tunnels, and the wonders and beauty of Simla itself have been so often described that I need not say again what has been said already. I will concentrate on other aspects of my visit to Simla. I went to the amateur dramatic presentation of Barrie's "Walker, London". I played tennis at the house of Mr. S.P. (later Lord) Sinha, who had resigned as Law Member, and was succeeded by Ali Imam. Sinha's daughter was at that time described by many as the most charming girl in Simla. I certainly found her very pleasant, except that she borrowed a book from me and left a cigarette mark on it. I walked everywhere, including round Jakko Hill, where I was destined in later years to have a son born to me in (of all names) Croydon House. I went for walks with Lloyd of the I.E.S. from Allahabad, and Goodeve of the I.C.S. from Calcutta. In the course of my stay, I met two Bengalis married to English wives, delightful people, named Ghosh and Mullick. I also met Rajah and Lady Hirnam Singh, Sikh Christians (if the terms are not contradictory).

On the 17th October I left Simla, and went to Delhi via Kalka. I had time to walk about Kalka, while waiting for my train.

I noticed at Kalka what filthy clothes many people wore. I wrote in my diary at the time: "Of course India is a dusty dirty land, without much water available at certain times, so there is some excuse for the inhabitants. Man wants but little here below, but wants that little clean. Where water is freely available, things are much better."

In Simla I had met a cleric named Andrews, an extraordinary man, who was afterwards associated with Tagore at Santiniketan. He was going by the same train as I was to Delhi, and as we were arriving at Delhi some time after midnight, he had offered to put me up for the night at the Cambridge Mission to Delhi College, in which he lived. He had originally been a Fellow of Pembroke College, Cambridge, so we came from the same University. He travelled third-class from Simla to Delhi, partly to economise and partly from principle, I suppose. Until you have seen a third-class carriage in India on a hot night, it is difficult to realise what an ordeal this implies. Next morning I was introduced to the staff of the College, including the Principal, a very distinguished Indian. I was destined to meet Andrews in very different circumstances at Santiniketan many years later.

During the next few days I explored Delhi, the present Delhi and all the seven dead Delhis. It was in some ways the most memorable experience of my life. It would be beyond the scope of this brief memorandum to attempt to describe what I saw. As regards the many scenes which recalled the Mutiny of 1857, I will only observe that I was struck with the extent to which it appeard from what I saw to have been a religious war—on both sides. In the churchyard of St. Stephens Church near the Kashmiri Gate, stood a hollow brass ball, which was originally on the summit of the church, holed by many bullets, surmounted by a hollow brass cross. It stood on a stone which bore an inscription stating that when it stood on the summit of the church, it was shot at by mutineers as a symbol of the Christian faith, and survived all attempts to shoot it down. Near by was a white marble cross commemorating six Beresfords (Beresford was a Bank Manager) and others who were murdered at the outbreak of the disturbances. An inscription stating the facts was, I noted, in English, Arabic, Hindi and Persian. It ended thus: Psalm CXXVI. When I looked up the reference I found: 'When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter and our tongue with singing. Then said they among Heathen : "The Lord hath done great things for them".' Forrest in his novel of Delhi in the days of the tribulation put Beresford into his story under the alias of Hilton. His firm put up a tablet to Beresford to commemorate the name of a devoted servant. Below it they inscribed the Biblical verse : "The time cometh when he that killeth you shall think he doeth God service."

I could quote many other instances in support of the theory that the Mutiny was a religious war on both sides, but this must suffice. I have used the past tense in quotation since I do not know to what extent time or the change of Government has erased these inscriptions.

On the same point I permit myself one further reference. G. W. Forrest, (not the R. E. Forrest of "Eight Days"), in his "Cities of India" tells us how on Sunday, 20th September 1857, British troops assembled in the Dewan-i-Khas, with earshot of that blood-stained spot in Delhi Fort where 50 men, women and children were on 16th May hacked to pieces, lifted up their voices in a solemn liturgy of praise and victory. "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us but unto thy name be the praise."

During the next three weeks I visited Agra, Lucknow, Fatehpur Sikri, Cawnpore, Allahabad and Patna. The memory of that marvellous journey amid sights and scenes of which I had read so often will abide with me for ever. But the story is not for telling here. I was immensely grateful that a bountiful providence had permitted me, with Kaye and Malleson's History of the Munity in my luggage, to traverse North India in this way before I was 27 years of age. I traced the march of the avenging armies from the Alamgarh to Lucknow, and through its streets, I saw the bullet marked gate where Lawrence died, I visited his grave in the Residency Grounds. At Agra I saw the Taj Mahal by moonlight, and by day heard the guardian of the tomb sing out his "Allah ho Akbar." I saw the dead russet city of Fatehpur Sikri, I made that melancholy march from Wheeler's pitiful fortress which the wretched survivors traversed to the Ghat at Cawnpore, only to be wickedly slaughtered. I saw the confluence of the waters at Allahabad, and the drab riverside stretch of Patna. I saw a thousand sights which I shall never forget, but I will mention one more only, the Ridge of Delhi, whereon stood a pillar of the long dead Asoka, brought here from Meerut, a pillar erected at Meerut at a time when Alexander the Great's invasion of India was not yet forgotten. I noted in my diary at the time : "This pillar will shortly look down on one of the most brilliant concourses in history, when, in the plain below, united India acclaims King George, King of England, Canada, Australia, South Africa New Zealand, Emperor of India, the mightiest monarch in the world. And Delhi, old when Athens and Rome were not, will call to mind her wonderful history, and accord him a right imperial welcome. Where Raja Dhava, Prithwi Raj, and Shah Jehan ruled, the Emperor George I of India will stand as God, and revered as God, amid countless multitudes of worshippers to whom sovereignty is a divine thing and who regard the sovereign as a mighty incarnation of God himself. It will be not the least wonderful of the wonderful events in the history of the Eternal City of Delhi." Well, the writer was young then, but there was something in what he wrote. But even he did not know that Delhi was destined in the following year by the Imperial ukase of the mighty King and Emperor to become what was hers by natural right, once again the capital of India.

Well well ! Fifty seven years later, "Quam tempora mutantur, et quam nos mutamur in illis !" (I ignore scansion). Delhi is still the Capital of free India. But only an unwise man would attempt to forecast what India may be in fifty seven more years. A single united entity still, with English, not Hindi, still the lingua franca ? A dozen or more separate states, based on language, with English nearly forgotten ? Or an Empire, but not a British Empire, once again with yet another language to be added to the existing babel of tongues ? One peers into the future, but nothing is clear in the vision.

I arrived back in Calcutta in the second week of November. On the journey back there was an untoward incident, the memory of which still makes me blush. When the train came into Patna, it was hopelessly crowded, and a number of us first-class passengers appealed to the Station Master to find us room. He promptly emptied a third-class carriage of its crowded load of travellers, and told us that that was the best that he could do ! I spent a very uncomfortable night, before we arrived in Howrah Station, the terminus in Calcutta of the East Indian Railway, thinking of those unfortunate waiting at Patna for the next train. Time of course meant less to the Indian traveller then, and probably means less now in India, where the traveller recks nought of time-tables and generally arrives at a station prepared to wait indefinitely for the next train, but I have always regretted in retrospect that no one of us had the strength of character to say : "No ! we can't have that !" I fancy we did not realise till too late that the Station Master would not find other accommodation for the unfortunates.

In April 1911 I made the journey to England. By going overland both in India, via Bombay, and from Marseilles through France, one could have about six weeks in England. The great drawback of this trip was that it involved returning to Bombay in the Salsette at the beginning of the monsoon, and one suffered accordingly. I am not sure whether it was on this trip from Bombay or on one of my subsequent journeys on this same route that I found among my fellow passengers the well known writer of novels on the Foreign Legion and his wife, Percy and Mrs. Wren. He was Principal of a Training College for Teachers in the Bombay Presidency. He told me that on one occasion a very bumptious official, whether English or Indian, he did not say, came to visit the College. Wren was a trifle offhanded with the official, so that the visitor was provoked to say : "Do you know who I am?" "No", said Wren, "are you God ?" He told me he had put this incident in one of his books. Hearing that Mrs. Wren was about to publish a book of her poems I said to her: "I must congratulate you on your forth-coming book." Wren said: "It's our fifth-coming book, isn't it, dear, for I have published four."

I arrived in England in time to endure the heat of one of the hottest summers which the country had endured for many years. Friends who saw how I suffered with the rest of them commented that India did not seem to have taught me how to endure heat. I had very pleasant meetings with my parents and many friends, but I was soon on my way back via Paris, Marseilles and Bombay to India once more. I ought to mention here a little story which may have happened on this journey or one of my other visits to England by the short route. I travelled with a colleague from Calcutta, and in the train at Marseilles we talked to each other in Hindustani, wanting to make quite that we were not understood. A Frenchman polietly enquired : "Monsieur est Polonnais, n'est-ce-pas?"

Between 1911 and 1914, when the outbreak of the Great War changed the whole aspect of things, I made other journeys the exact chronological order of which I do not recall. In one of the shorter (i.e. the Puja) vacations, I visited Rangoon and and Malay States. I fear I remember Rangoon for its ladies smoking what Kipling called "whacking great cheroots". I visited the Great Pagoda and the Victoria Lake, but my stay in Rangoon was very short. I remember much more of my visit to the F.M.S., as an old college friend at Sidney Sussex College, whose sister I afterwards married, was in the Civil Service there, and looked after me. I attended one of his trials and was appealed to in open Court for the meaning of a Hindustani word which had cropped up in evidence. Alas ! I did not know it. I was then less proficient in the language than later on after my army service. I visited the Victoria School, in Kuala Lumpur and noticed that the boys were drawn from at least five or six differnt races or religions. I met the Headmaster, an Englishman, whose wife had just been sentenced to death for the murder of a lover who had discarded her. I seem to remember his name as Proudlock, but I may be wrong. The authorities avoided the disagreeable task of executing her by getting the local Sultan to reprieve the lady. I did not discuss the matter with the Headmaster. Somerset Maugham many years later put whole episode, very thinly disguised, into his well known play "The Letter". I believe that both husband and wife were alive in England at the time of the play. I played golf with my friend, whose name was Ellis, on the Kuala Lumpur course, and was taken by him into the Black and White Club. I remember it by that name, but forget its real name. I wandered about rubber plantations, saw the whole process of making rubber, and in fact got lost for a time in the wilderness of rubber trees. I was rescued after finding a wayside telephone.

Another October, I visited Mt. Abu, where a member of the I.C.S., Holme, put me up. It was delightful to see something of Rajputana, though my stay was short and I could not see much. I saw the marvels of Jeipur, which might properly be described as a "rose-red city half as old as time", Ajmere, the wonders of Amber, and Alighar College, long before its development into a great Islamic University. I remember calling at the post office in Alighar to ask for letters. When I gave my name, Oaten, the Babu Postmaster sprang to attention, brought forward a chair for me to sit on, which he dusted so vigorously that I thought he was polishing it. When I spelt my name for greater precision, his face fell. "Are you not Mr. Oakden, our new Deputy Commissioner?" he said. I said that "I had not the honour to be that gentleman". Dusting ceased.

I think it was in the autumn of 1972 that I spent a month in the Darjeeling Hills. I stayed at the Balaclava Hotel at Ghum as with all my travels I had to economise, and the Balaclava was cheaper. As the advertisement said : "The Balaclava charge was great : not so the Balaclava charges. Ghum, in which village the Balaclava Hotel was situated, was a pleasant place, higher than Darjeeling. It had the last railway station before Darjeeling, and after that station the railway descended for three or four miles to that place. On the left of the railway are situated two grassy knolls, and on one occasion when I was approaching Ghum at a time when everything including the Himalayas was shrouded in mist, I heard one American traveller say to another : "I wonder which of those two hills is Everest!" There was a very delightful walk via Jalapahar to Darjeeling. Later on, I rented successively two houses on or near this walk, one Mount Vernon Villa, and the other Verbena Villa. The names of houses in the hills (as we called mountains) were hopelessly Victorian and suburban, as I found out later in Simla, where I rented Croydon, House. One would have given much for a picturesque Indian name.

I must not forget one delightful incident during my visit to England in 1911. A member of the congregation of St. Peter's Church Tunbridge Wells, which was our family church, invited me to lunch. His name was Captain Penton, Thompson, an old Etonian, and a retired member of the Indian Army. He was of strong Evangelical or Low church principles, of the kind which were held by many members of the Indian services, at the time of Mutiny. He had heard that I had recently visited the Ridge of Delhi, and wished to meet me, as he had himself served on the Ridge as a gunner in 1857. It was a delightful lunch, with a good bottle of Burgundy, and memorable for a most interesting talk. He told me that he was pumping round shot into the walls of Delhi, when a young staff officer, who was afterwards the famous Lord Roberts (Bobs) galloped upto him, and said something like this: "General's compliments, Sir, and why the dickens are you firing at the walls *there* ? He wants it over *here*" (pointing elsewhere). He told me he met Roberts about 1893, when crossing to Ireland, and they remembered and discussed the incident. He was interested to hear about Hindu Rao's House, and said that to the best of his recollection he once entered it to try to get a drink of water. He said that inside there were two Indians, who gave him a drink. Later on two soldiers went in, and he heard shrieks, on the principle, he feared, so often held and put into practice by the troops, that every dark skinned man was a Mutineer. Captain Thompson told me that soon after he was wounded and took very little further part in the operations. To have made such a contact across the years so soon after visiting the Ridge was a matter of great satisfaction to me.

I visited England again in 1913, during the long vacation, and again in 1914, when in June I married at Grayshott Church Dorothy Aileen Fegan Ellis, daughter of a retired schoolmaster. She had been resident Secretary to the well known C.B. Fry on his training ship, but did not like the job and soon quit. Shortly before we were married she was Assistant Secretary of Holloway College, Egham. When the War broke out in August (I had taken extra leave to add to the College vacation) I asked for instructions from the India Office, and was told to return to my post in India. On the way through the Suez Canal; we met troopships carrying troops from India to France. We were greeted with yells from the troops : "You're going the wrong way, you're going the wrong way", and some of us felt like that. I should add that on this visit to England, I saw my mother for the last time, as she died in the following year, the war having been too much of a shock for her. Perhaps it was fortunate that she did not live, as my father did, to see one son die in Italy in 1916, and another gassed and shocked on the Somme in the same year, an event which in my opinion hastened my brother's premature death several years later.

We travelled to Calcutta via Bombay. At Bombay I looked up an acquaintance who had some years before been the heir to an ancient Baronetcy, his brother, the baronet, being unmarried. When my friend was an apprentice in a steel works in England, he had become engaged to the daughter of his landlady in a northern town, unknown to his mother and relatives. I had met his sister in Calcutta, and she had gone on to China at the time when he brought the bride out to Calcutta, for the purpose of marrying her. The family then got hear to of it, and I had a cable from the sister in Peking asking me whether it was really true. The marriage had taken place by then, and the couple set up in a flat in Calcutta. She welcomed me warmly when I called. The lady insisted from the first on doing her own cooking in the tiny kitchen, which was unusual. How long she kept it up I do not know; perhaps she dropped it when the hot weather began. I called on the dowager in England later, and found her very bitter. "Of course there will be a divorce", she said. There spoke aristocratic England, before the Great War had made some of us more equal. The only thing that could be done was to marry off the baronet, and soon heirs came along so that the Baronetcy was saved from the corruption of the blood of a factory worker ! The Baronet went on to become one of our

Ambassadors. The younger brother was transferred from Calcutta to Bombay, where I have no doubt that the lady left her kitchen to its proper inhabitants. It was there that I looked them up in 1914.

The issue of the Presidency College Magazine for November 1914 had the following references to two marriages. "We have missed very much the well known figure of our friend and professor Mr. E.F. Oaten. He proceeded to England last April. He was married on June 15th. We offer him and Mrs. Oaten a hearty welcome back to India.

"Another interesting social event of the Long Vacation was the marriage of Professor Coyajee. We offer our best wishes to him and Mrs. Coyajee."

The Magazine was edited by students and these good wishes were sincere. I had arrived back at a time when there was a fervour of approval among the students for England's action in declaring war. There was general good feeling. As the magazine put it : "A wave of loyalty has touched the shores of the overseas dominions of the Emperor. The peoples of India accept the British cause not only as subjects of the British Empire, but as comrades in a struggle for existence, as vital to their interests as to those of any other part of the Empire."

For the moment all was harmony and co-operation. Things were destined to change, but that story must be left to another chapter.

I find that I have omitted to mention journeys to Benares and Kashmir. Both of these visits were made in my bachelor days. I refer to the Kashmir visit in connection with a later visit which is described in a later chapter. As regards the Benares journey, it was a very short visit and I cannot state the date precisely. I saw the numerous Hindu temples, and the banks of the Ganges, bathing in which is one of the sacred duties incumbent on a Hindu, and where to die is his highest felicity. Among many memories one remains firmly in my mind, the sight of an enormous stone bull over which, in the interest of the comfort of the animal, a hand-operated punkah waved eternally. I often wonder whether in these degenerate days it has been replaced by an electric fan.

4

AT THE PRESIDENCY COLLEGE—2

(1914-1916)

At the outset of this chapter, which describes my last years at the Presidency College, I must try to sketch a word picture of Mr. H.R. James, the Principal of the College, who resigned the post under unhappy circumstances in 1916.

In the first issue of the College Magazine after that resignation, Mr. W.C. Wordsworth, who succeeded Mr. James as Principal, wrote these very true words: "Above all, the College has lost a ruler and teacher who had served it for many years, and the cause of education in Bengal for more years, with powers and devotion which few possess. This is the greatest loss for it cannot be made good."

Mr. James was a scholar and a gentleman. He had published scholarly books, and from time to time wrote sensitive poetry. Even after he had retired to England, he sent poems to the Magazine. One was a sonnet on the death of Lord Kitchener on 5th June, 1916. Another was a sonnet on the death of Captain C. Fryatt, shot by the Germans on 27th July, 1916 "in contempt of the laws of war." These poems were published in the same issue of the Magazine which contained Mon Mohan Ghosh's "Britannia", mentioned previously. He had written competently on the various educational problems facing Bengal. He had had much experience elsewhere than in Calcutta.

The calibre of the man was exhibited in a magnificent address which he gave to the students of the College on August 25th, 1914, after the outbreak of the War. It deserves quotation as a whole, but it is long, and I can only quote a small extract.

"I am speaking in Bengal and to Bengali students; and the first thing that occurs to me to say to you about patriotism is, that patriotism and the national spirit which it fosters, is, in Bengal, a comparatively modern product. Patriotism in the sense we now understand it is not, so far as I know, and I am very willing to be corrected-traceable in Bengal in earlier centuries. It is not to be traced in the 15th century; nor in the 16th; nor in the 17th century; nor in the 18th century; nor can you find very much what you could call patriotism in the first half of the 19th century. It is something which has come along with modern education, with English education, as we sometimes call it. I do not think it would be misleading to say that patriotism in Bengal was a product of British rule. This is surely a fact of importance. It is specially important that those who have been born within the last twenty or twenty-five years should realise and recognise this. For *if you do* you will surely agree with me that one thing patriotism in Bengal should not do, is to direct the national spirit into an attitude of hostility to British rule. There would be something I should call parricidal in such an attitude. Happily there is no need for me to labour the point today. Something has happened which has brought us all together in one great union of patriotism and we are all engaged in thinking what we can do to help the Empire, in this great crisis, so as to preserve the blessings of civil order, prosperity, education and culture, for which the British power is the guarantee and protection over such great tracts of the earth's surface. But it is well that we should not altogether forget, at least that you should not altogether forget, that it has not always been so well with us during recent years. I have accustomed myself to speak the truth to you here. I have not been afraid to speak the truth, even when distasteful, to Lieutenant Governors and other great personages; and I have not been afraid to speak the truth to you. . . . Remember, please; as I conceive my relation to you—your interest is my interest, your cause is my cause, your praise is my praise, and your reproach my reproach. So I say to you that you have not always been blameless in this matter. Therefore in your ardour of loyalty now, do not forget that there is some tarnish of disloyalty to be brushed away.

For this not God's own power can avail
To make undone that which has once been done."

There was much more in the same grand swelling strain. On that day Principal James was inspired and gave to his students thoughts and truths drawn from the depths of the scholarship fibre and fire that were the essence of the man.

To talk to James in these moods was a delight. But there was another side to the man. He was a deeply disappointed man. There is a hint of this in his defiant reference to the truths he has felt compelled to speak to Lieutenant Governors. What these hard truths were I do not know. What his previous disappointments had been I also do not know. But the crowning disappointment was the appointment of W.W. Hornell, afterwards Sir William Hornell, to the post of Director of Public Instruction, Bengal, a post to which James legitimately aspired. Hornell had been a member of the Indian Educational Service for a short time some years previously, but had resigned after a year or so, and had returned to join the Educational Service in Whitehall. After some years the Directorship became vacant. James was passed over (was it because of plain speaking to Lieutenant Governors?) and Hornell was selected, still quite a young man. The appointment was perhaps made in view of the impending Royal Commission on Calcutta University, since it was perhaps thought that a man versed in the ways of Whitehall would be useful to the Commission. To understand the disappointment of the Service as a whole, it should be remembered that the Directorship was the only really well-paid post in the service, and of course James' disappointment was due to the fact that he thought his long devoted service had earned his promotion. The matter was ventilated in the House of Lords, when a noble Lord asked their Lordships what they would think if a young lieutenant in a Regiment overseas resigned his commission in that Regiment to serve in England, and then after a few years was sent out as its Colonel. The appointment stood however and, thereafter, both James and Mrs. James were deeply disappointed people. I think the episode warped the former's outlook on life to some extent. His philosophy of life had had put on it too great a strain.

An innovation which was inaugurated by Mr. James was the institution of seminars in each subject. At these seminars students read papers and discussion followed. I was President of the Historical Seminar. These seminars became a very valuable part of the life of the College, and often were quite delightful meetings. I have an account before me of the last meeting which I held. At this meeting the news was given that I was obtaining a Commission in the Army. Very pleasant things were spoken, at the end of which the Secretary moved that a farewell entertainment should be got up for me, and that my portrait should be preserved in the Seminar. Then Mr. Iswar Chandra Chakravarty B.A., read his paper on "The Indebtedness of Europe to the Civilisation of the Near East." A debate followed.

Mr. James made one error, I think, during this time. He decided that one person in each subject should be responsible to him for the organisation of that subject in the College, and that that person should be the senior Indian Educational Service man in each subject. This meant that quite distinguished scholars in the Provincial Service had to submit their programmes of work through the I.E.S. man. It did not mean much in practice, for one always accepted the proposed programme of the Provincial service man, and we treated them as scholars and gentleman, but I think it rankled a bit.

Meantime the attitude of some students was changing. There was of course a very vigorous political agitation going on all around one, and some of the students were gradually affected. I do not know at what date the (later on) famous Bengali patriot became a member of the College. His name, so well known later, was Subhash Chandra Bose. I do not know how or whether he was mainly responsible for unsettling the minds of students and making them less amenable to the very necessary College discipline. But certainly by early 1916 there was an unruly element in the College, less willing to accept rules.

But before I try to chronicle the events which followed on this untoward development, I must mention a very happy event which took place during Mr. James' principalship. This was nothing less than an invasion of the College by the 10th Battalion of the Middlesex Regiment, who were in March

1915 garrisoning the Fort in Calcutta. It was a very friendly and welcome invasion. As the College Magazine put it : "We thank the Principal for the opportunity of meeting the soldiers. It was an experience which Calcutta students never get. Before we came into touch with these Territorials, the word "military" suggested a sense of roughness and rudeness. But the amiability and friendliness of these gentlemen of Fort William have made us change our views." The visit was indeed a happy one. It is not surprising that the event was enjoyed by both sides, for these "gentlemen in khaki" were really teachers in disguise, since the Battalion which had come out to garrison Calcutta was made up mainly of teachers from the Training Colleges. As the Magazine put it: "the Baker Laboratories. . . . were crowded with our military guests: some were smoking cigarettes provided by the Khitmagar near the staircase; some were talking with the students and members of the staff assembled. Many and varied were the remarks which our guests made at the sight of lecture rooms, laboratories and gymnasium. Inspection over our guests partook of refreshments provided at the expense of Principal James and the staff in one of the big halls of the Science Building. When the various experiments were finished, our guests made for the Astronomical Observatory for sky observations. After nightfall, we came downstairs and rejoined the other parties. Some of the soldiers seemed deeply absorbed in conversation with Mr. Oaten and Mr. P.N. Banerji— perhaps getting some mysteries of the war explained to them."

"Addresses were exchanged and mutual good wishes expressed. The visit came to an end at 9.30 p.m."

A touch of humour enlivened the account in the Magazine. Dealing with the surprise felt by some students at the sudden invasion of the College by the Army, it stated : "Their position seemed to be somewhat like the genial old gentlemen in Punch who being awakened from his nap in Hyde Park by the noise of running feet and finding before him the glistening bayonets of Kitchener's men at drill, speedily came to the conclusion that the Germans had invaded London."

But it is time to pass on to more disagreeable events. I have set the story of indiscipline which I have to tell in juxtaposition to the happy and genial story which I have just told to emphasise the point that there was a fund of goodwill existing in the the College, that the students were corrupted and misled by a handful "of bad hats", whose objects were mainly political, and that weakness in not standing up to the subverters of discipline is the utmost that can form the indictment against the mass of the student body.

There were various incidents of indiscipline, some of which did not come under my notice. There was an uproar at the Hostel of which I forget the details. Of another incident which I also forget, remember, this that I was anxious that the account of it should not be distorted in the local Bengali-owned press. So Coyajee and I paid a visit to the Editor of the "Bengali", and saw the Editor, Surendra Nath Banerji, (later Sir Surendra Nath). He was a doughty fighter for his views, so much so that he was nicknamed "Surrender Not". He courteously allowed us to see the account which he proposed to publish of the incident, and allowed us to blue-pencil out anything which we thought incorrect or tendentious. When we bought the paper next day, the article was exactly as we had left it after alteration, but alas ! in another column there was an account containing the false or tendentious story headed "Another account which reaches us is as follows !" So it had been "Labour lost" for Coyajee and myself !

One device of the malcontents was to twist any words spoken by anyone in authority to a worse meaning. I must admit that on one occasion I laid myself wide open to this form of attack. It was the custom to invite a member of the staff to the Eden Hindu Hostel, and in return for the refreshments (surbat and sandeshas) the visitor was expected to make a speech embodying some learning. On one occasion I drew a parallel between the Hellenisation of the Middle East by the Greeks after Alexander the Great, and the Anglicisation of India and the introduction among the educated classes of English. It was a perfectly fair and natural comparison. Unfortunately I rated the critical faculties of my audience too high. In the course of my remarks which were quite detailed and without notes, I mentioned en passant that the Hellenes called the Persians and their other subjects "Barbaroi" and explained that it meant "Non-Greek speaking". I did not dream that the dissident section of the students would twist this historical statement into an allegation that I had called

Indians "barbarians". But I should have been more on my guard. "There's a chiel among ye taking notes, and faith he'll prent 'em." But I was, as I thought, among friends, a guest on a social occasion, among friends, I repeat, whom I regarded as historical students and whom I was prepared to treat as gentlemen, not among enemies amongst whom I must watch my every word and expression. And of course the basic idea was so absurd, that I thought of my students as barbarians, students with whom I spent hours on the cricket field, and whom I in many cases made my friends. It was just too silly. But everything is grist to the mill of the political agitator.

In January and February of the year 1916 there began to be flagrant disregard of one of the essential College rules, a rule obedience to which was essential in the interest of all. The rule was this. I cannot put it better than in the words of Principal Wordsworth written after the troubles were over. "I must reiterate that no student is allowed in the corridors during lecture hours unless he has business at the office, and that neglect of this rule a few minutes before the hour is equally culpable with its neglect at any other time. The rule is made in the interests of students and teachers alike; obedience is easy and necessary . . . . Our building is old and not conveniently arranged, nor in a climate like this can lecture rooms be kept closed against disturbance from without."

This rule was well known, and obedience to it was made easy by the ringing of a bell at the close of the hour when the lecture in progress ended. Class rooms opened off from a long corridor, and if any body of students streamed past the necessarily open door of a lecture room before the hour was up, the lecture in the room must abruptly cease, whatever the point in his argument the lecturer had reached. In January and February 1916 the rule began to be flagrantly disregarded. I cannot help but think that some lecturers either ignorant or careless of the rule must have been a contributing factor. But the main cause was certainly the growing indiscipline in the College, fostered by the disruptive element. Time and time again one's lectures were abruptly terminated by crowds of students shuffling past the open door of the lecture room, long before the bell had gone. At last I grew tired of the situation. When the stream of students began filing past the door, I left the room and stood with my arms outstretched across the corridor, forbidding further passage. It was a case of "those behind said 'forward' and those in front said 'back'." There was no violence. My recollection is that the students retreated in the direction from which they had come, and I continued my lecture. That was all that happened. But it was the beginning of many troubles.

I must be careful here and very explicit. At this distance of time I cannot pretend to remember what I said to the students in the corridor; I was not called upon afterwards to testify or repeat them, but I am certain that words did not go beyond something like this : "Go back. You know that you are not allowed to pass along the corridor until the bell sounds." As regards any question of assault, if there was one at all, it was an involuntary one against myself, and a technical one at that, by the foremost students against my open arms, pushed from behind by the students. But it was all quite trivial : there was nothing like violence on either side. Let me now put into juxtaposition with this statement of the facts Hugh Toye's caricature of them in his "Springing Tiger", his most attractive life of Subbash Chandra Bose.

"He was expelled for his leading part in an assault on one of the English lecturers. The lecturer had been indiscreet and impatient, the students too ready to take offence. Hostility had grown. There had been angry protests against remarks which he had made, and Bose had led them. The students were excited, militant, determined to dramatise, to see the affair as a test of the manhood of Indian youth, and hence of India's own future. 'India has entered on a new life' he wrote at this time, 'Blessed are we that we are living in this auspicious hour. Cast off despair and look yonder to the new light before us, and follow it.' Such a mood in a pupil was more than difficult. *At length a chance word caused the Englishman to lose his temper, and he laid his hands on one of the students.* That afternoon a party of them assaulted him. Bose had been present and his leadership was taken for granted; he would neither deny it nor apologise, and was expelled in February 1916." (The sentence underlined is not italicised in the book.)

I have underlined the passage above because it is difficult to imagine a sentence more misleading and untruthful. I do not ascribe malice to Toye. There were scores of versions of the incident flying about in the Calcutta press, and by word of mouth, many of them wicked perversions or tendentious rubbish. Even Tagore was drawn into the argument. I did not see much of this comment, as I went to Australia soon after, and missed most of it. But Toye had undoubtedly to pick his path through a mass of lies, and he chose the wrong story, since I cannot believe that he invented it. The fact that I was trying to enforce discipline in the interests of all is nowhere mentioned. There was no chance word, as stated. I did not "lay my hands" on a student : in fact during the whole of my service in India I never at any time "laid my hand" on any Indian student or otherwise. Such an action would have gone against my whole conception of my duty as a servant of the Government of India. Toye cannot have had any conception of the deep distress that such an accusation caused a man of honour and sensitivity (even though he mentioned no one by name), or he would have consulted me before putting such a lie on paper. After all, I have been in "Who's Who" for forty years, and he could not plead ignorance of my whereabouts. As regards my temper, I was angry, but not beyond what was necessary in the face of such deliberate flouting of the College rules. And there is one further though lesser inaccuracy. It was not on the afternoon of the incident that I was assaulted. It was a day or two later, as I remember the facts.

A I recollect the course of events, the College went on strike, as a result presumably of the garbled accounts of the incident which the dissidents spread. I forget the length of time during which they absented themselves from lectures.

At length lectures began again, the students drifting back, as indeed they were bound to do, if they were to take their examinations. Then occurred two incidents, unconnected with each other, which brought about the final catastrophe. One of them was an action by me which in retrospect I greatly regretted, since it added much to the tribulations and trials of Mr. James. I addressed my sixth year class, and said I deeply regretted that so senior an element in the College, which should have set a better example, had not stood out against the strike. I said I did not feel able to lecture to them on that day, and I dismissed the class till tomorrow. On the same day, a very small (probably first year) student was playing and larking in the corridor, when Mr. J.W. Holme went up to him and taking the lobe of his ear gently in his finger said, quite kindly : "Don't you think you are making rather a noise ?" This was technical assault and a very unwise one, only excusable by the fact that some of the students were so small that one unconsciously tended to treat them like boys. The College immediately went on strike again, and I have often thought that in the general suspicion and unrest Holme's unwise action was ascribed to me, by some if not all, and helped to make the dissident section come to the conclusion to assault me.

Either that afternoon, or the next day, when I was posting in the downstairs corridor a Sports Notice (about cricket) I was attacked from behind by a body of men whom I never saw, and brought to the ground in the middle of about ten pairs of kicking feet. Gilchrist hearing a noise, came up, and my assailants ran out of the College. I had no idea who they had been.

I was first hurried to a doctor, and inoculated against tetanus, which it was feared I might contract, since the germs are present in Calcutta dirt. In the club that evening I met Colonel Swinton ("Ole Look Oi" of journalistic fame) who expressed his horror at the incident. The London "Times", though pressed for space in war time, gave the incident about twenty lines. The police called on me and asked whether I wished a prosecution to be undertaken, but I said "No". Meantime from some source or other it had been surmised that Subhash Chandra Bose had been present. He appeared before a College disciplinary Board. The young idealist of 19 stood before the Board, rather like one wearing a Roman toga, with very ample folds on the upper part of his body, under which he folded his arms. He gave the impression of having something under those ample folds, and C.W. Peake, fearing that he had a bomb and was going to blow them all up, stepped forward and investigated under the toga. There was no bomb. I think Bose had been having a little quiet fun at the expense of the Board. So far as I remember he declined to say anything in his defence, and it was eventually decided to expel him from the College. Toye says this incident was the turning point in his eventful career. "He had been the most disturbing element in the College." Had he ? "He would create other disturbances for them to remember." Bose was eventually admitted to another College (Scottish Churches) in Calcutta a year later. In 1919 he took first class honours in philosophy, and then went on to Cambridge, where he wrote : "What gives me the greatest joy is to watch the whiteskins serving me and cleaning my shoes." Not a very noble emotion, but understandable. At this point I leave Subhash Chandra Bose for a while.

With the expulsion of Subhash the College would probably have calmed down and Mr. James could probably have restored order. But an assault upon a member of the Staff was a serious matter, and the Government of Bengal decided to act. The College was closed sine die, and it was decided to appoint a committee to examine and report on the state of discipline in the Presidency College. I cannot be certain, but I seem to recollect that those were the words in which the task of the committee was defined. They could easily have been drafted in a manner less wounding to Mr. James' amour propre. To add to his distress, the committee contained two men whom he did not regard as friends, but rather enemies. Mr. Hornell was the man who had been appointed to a post which he felt should have been his right, and Sir Asutosh Mookherji, he thought, was no friend of the Indian Educational Service. Mr. James went off to see Mr. P.C. Lyon, of the Indian Civil Service, whom he regarded as responsible for appointing the committee, framing its commission and selecting its personnel, and it appears that he was very angry. I do not remember what the official record of the meeting with Mr. Lyon was, but rumour had it that Mr. James saw him in his bathroom, and informed Mr. Lyon that he was "a base, astute and treacherous man." The story may be the purest invention, and I cannot vouch for it. But the immediate upshot of the meeting was that Mr. James was suspended from his post, and soon allowed to go on leave preparatory to retirement. Mr. W.C. Wordsworth, the Assistant Director of Public Instruction, was appointed to succeed him.

The committee met, and I gave evidence before it. I never saw the report, which was never communicated to me, and I have no idea of its contents. I heard however one comment made by Sir Asutosh Mookherji, which was communicated to me by Promatha Nath Banerji, who had become Sir Asutosh's son-in-law. Sir Asutosh remarked that he thought that I would make a good lawyer. I am doubtful whether I should take that as a compliment or not.

The College remained closed till the vacation in April, and re-opened in July. Meantime, feeling that I needed a real holiday to recuperate from the worries of the past six weeks, I took my wife to Australia, where we were able to stay for six weeks. On returning in July, I worked for a month or two. The students were now in much better shape, and I was enjoying my work, especially with my sixth year class, when permission came for me to take a commisson in the Army. Owing to my experience as a Trooper in the Calcutta Light House, which had lasted from 1911 to 1916, I became a 2nd Lieutenant in the XIth King Edward's Own Lancers, (Probyn's Horse), and joined my regiment at Dera Ismail Khan on the North-West Frontier on 15th September 1916.

My life in the Army will require a separate chapter. I will only observe that, though I never knew what the committee reported, I take it as certain that it did not find that I assaulted a student, since I cannot imagine that the swift promotion which came to me after the war would have come to one who had "laid his hands on a student", an unpardonable offence as well as an unpardonable accusation, made worse by its very vagueness and lack of precision. It is a wicked and tendentious phrase, allowing the reader to imagine what he wishes to believe.

One final word. A few years later I went to the funeral of Mr. James in a churchyard in the lovely village of Mayfield, Sussex. Later, I saw on his tombstone the simple words in Greek lettering: Es aei, for ever.

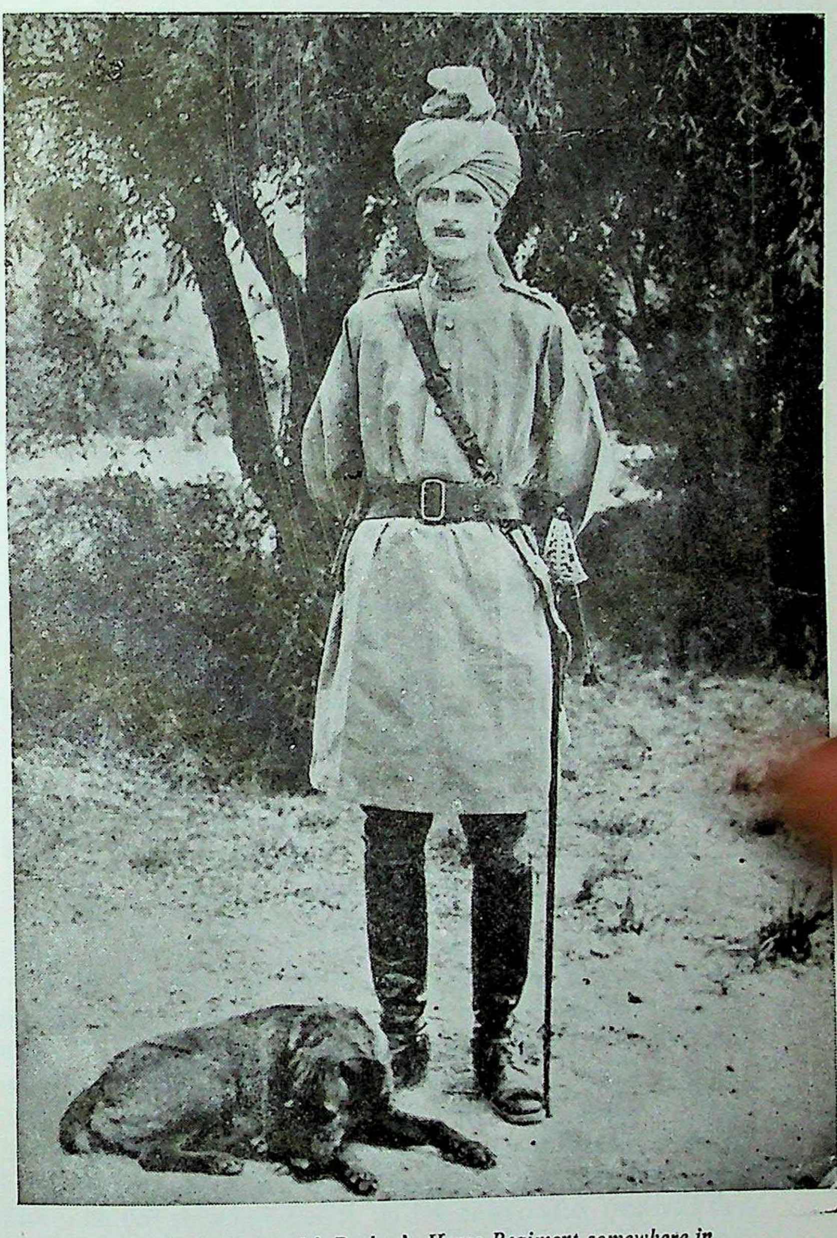
5

WITH PROBYN'S HORSE
(1916-1919)

Going to the North-West Frontier of India was for me like entering a new world. No greater contrast could be imagined than that which exists between the lush green steamy country of Bengal and the dusty arid nullah-split plains that lay between the River Indus and the Suleiman Mountains and the Durand Line beyond which lived semi savage tribes and beyond them the Afghans.

I had never been further west or rather north-west than Delhi, Rajputana and Kashmir. Now the train took me through Ambala, and Lahore, and then south skirting the border lands till we came to Darya Khan. At this point one left the railway, and struggled across the desert by horse or tonga about ten miles till one reached the River Indus. In the dry season the river was spanned by a bridge of boats, across which one could ride. In the wet season the bridge of boats would have been swept by the floods which came down from the mountains and swelled the river in breadth and depth, and as the bridge of boats would have been useless in such conditions, it was annually removed to prevent catastrophe.

The Regiment was at the time of my arrival stationed at Dera Ismail Khan, about three miles to the west of the River. I cannot better sum up the character of the place, and my feelings toward it, than by quoting the opening lines of a long poem which I contributed many years later to the Probyn's Horse News Letter of 1949.



Prof. Oaten with Probyn's Horse Regiment somewhere in North Western Frontier during the Ist World War; 1917.

"O it's thirty years on since I rode at the head
of a troop of horse.
On the flats where the Indus struggles awhile on
its seaward course.
We had started from Darya Khan, and struggled
through desert and sand :
'Twas nigh ten miles to the boat-bridge by which
the river was spanned.
We halted awhile for a breather; then crossed on
the boats to the west;
And they heaved on the stream like roses on a
slumbering maiden's breast.
Soon we trotted away from the river until at last
we came
To a dusty and dreary old town : Dera Ismail Khan
was its name.
It was "Dismal old Khan" to the Briton, and oft
to the patient sowar
'Twas the father and mother of "Diqq", for the
home he had left was far.
But to me 'twas a home on the frontier which I
lived in for nigh two years
With no sorrow nor worry nor trouble and never a
pause for tears,
Save once when a raider's bullet had lodged in a
comrade's head,
And once when a message from home said a kinsman
in France was dead."

I was happy from the first day of my stay with the Regiment. It gave me a warm welcome, from the Colonel (Sarel) down to the ressalder-Major, the other Indian officers and the men. It may have been because I could ride a horse reasonably well, though I soon found that I had much to learn. For instance I had never before jumped a stile on a horse without reins or stirrups. That exercise required a bit of nerve the first time one accomplished it. A day or two after I arrived the Regiment was ordered to make a night march for the purpose of practising marching by the stars. We set out at eleven, and got home at about seven a.m. It was very hot, and I was about as dead beat as ever I had been in all my life. I remember that I had a terrific thirst, which I quenched in Mess as soon as I could by drinking sixteen successive lime- squashes.

Some of the field officers were a bit disgruntled. Some of them had been in France, where the possibilities of glory and promotion were many, and disliked having to return to India, as part of the garrison. Major Robertson, my squadron Commander, was one of these. Major Rennick, another squadron Commander, kept two enormous dogs (I forget the breed) and was frequently at Probynabad, the Regiment's horse farm, where horses were bred for the Regiment. Major Hartley, a very genial person, arrived a little later. In later years he became Commander in Chief, Indian Army. I received from him, in common with other officers, a valuable lesson in Regimental etiquette. Some of us were talking to him on the lawn of the Mess, and someone addressed him as "Major". "Don't call me, Major", he said, a little sharply, "Call me Hartley." That was the sort of Regiment it was.

Another field officer was Reggie Anderson. The story had it that he had got very much in debt in his earlier days, and was given an appointment in the Andaman Islands, where it was impossible to spend money, to enable him to get out of the red. He got further out of the red late in my service by a fortunate marriage, which was very happy. We liked each other and thereby hangs a little story. Colonel Sarel, who was very charming but with high standards of efficiency, thought that I was a bit slow in getting up to Regimental standards, and his first confidential report on me was not wholly favourable. In accordance with military custom he showed it to me. Then he went on leave. Anderson took over. The report had not yet gone up to Headquarters, so Anderson tore it up, wrote a nice report on me, and in similar accord with military custom, showed it to me. I was duly grateful, but naturally hoped that the Colonel would stay on leave long enough to forget the one he had written! I suppose the two men differed on the question as to what constituted efficiency. Or perhaps Anderson thought that the standards applicable to a young man ought to be somewhat relaxed for a man starting the hard life of a cavalryman at the age of 32. So, again, I say: "That was the sort of Regiment it was!"

Dera Ismail Khan was one of a series of cantonments, or large military posts which ran from Peshawar southward, designed to keep a watch on and control the movements of the more or less savage tribesmen between the North-West Frontier Province and Afghanistan. The particular tribesmen over against us at D. I. K. were the Mahsuds, one of the least attractive and most savage of the tribes. They used to raid the plains to the east of their territory in search of loot or of brides whenever they saw an opportunity, and from time to time an expedition was instituted to restrain their thieving propensities. One of these expeditions took place during my time on the frontier, which will be referred to later on. There was a native city beyond the cantonment, where a magnificent medley of stalwart big-boned men could be seen. There was also sometimes feminine society on show, which one day prompted Major Robertson, who was not very fond of being at D.I.K. to say mordantly: "Plenty for the men, but nothing for the officers."

Our Regiment was part of the Derajat Brigade, which was commanded by Brigadier General Baldwin. For some reason Baldwin was disliked by the Regiment, I never quite knew why except that perhaps he paid little regard to the wishes of Probyn's Horse, which as a Lancer Regiment rather fancied themselves. In consequence one little incident rather raised my stock in the Regiment. Baldwin, hearing that I was a Professor of History, asked me to give a lecture to the Garrison on Indian History. I decided to talk to the Garrison (attendance was compulsory and was in Army Orders) on Alexander the Great's invasion of India, because he had invaded regions of India not very far from where we were then. A communication came from Baldwin's Brigade Major saying that the General wanted to see my lecture before I delivered it. I was in a spot. I only lectured from brief notes. I replied that I always lectured ex tempore, and there was no time to write it out in full by tomorrow. The request was perforce withdrawn. I am afraid that in the Regiment I was regarded as a 2nd Lieutenant who had pulled a fast one on the General.

Baldwin comes into my story in another way. When I arrived in D. I. K. I discovered that there was a local Masonic

Lodge called Derajat Lodge. This was normally a military Lodge, but owing to the departure of so many members to the European theatre of war and elsewhere, it was very difficult to find enough members to keep the Lodge alive. Roos Keppel, the Commissioner of the North West Frontier Province, was a keen Mason himself, and he had asked Sir John Donald, the Deputy Commissioner, to keep the Lodge going. It is well known that Masonic ceremonies consist of a certain ritual which is followed in working ceremonies. Sir John did his best, but he was so weak on ritual that he perpetrated some remarkable betises, which I cannot detail without lifting unduly the veil of secrecy which shrouds our ceremonies. I became a joining member of the Lodge, and was able to witness a very unusual event in the shape of the initiation of the commanding officer of the Brigade and one of his serjeant-majors at the same ceremony. For it seems that Sir John Donald had carried out his orders to keep the Lodge alive so well that under his influence Baldwin had decided to enter the fraternity. Over thirty years later there was a pleasant sequel to my membership of the Derajat Lodge. I was doing legal work in Lewes, Sussex, about 1949, when a man who had business in my office, in the course of conversation said that he was the Worshipful Master of the Derajat Lodge. "How can that be?" I asked, "it is 6000 miles away." "Oh no," he replied, "when India became free, we packed up, and transferred the Lodge to London." So I want to Lodge Derajat again, this time as a guest of the Lodge in London. But alas! the faces were all new. It was nearly thirty years on.

There was another reason why I found D.I.K. pleasant. I discovered that there were eight Old Tonbridgians in or not far off from the cantonment. I had been at Tonbridge from 1899 to 1903. My chief rival in the Sixth form in 1903, whom I could never quite overtake, was Richard Roy Maconachie. He had gone on to Oxford, and had passed 2nd in the Home and Indian Civil Service Examination. He had chosen India. And there I found him in D.I.K. as a Deputy Commissioner. When I called on him, I found him whiling away his loneliness by reading through Gibson's History of the "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire." We discussed the political situation in India. He told me that he had chosen the Political Department of the Civil Service because he foresaw that freedom must come to British India, sooner or later, and that the Political Service would be Indianised last. He illustrated his argument by quoting a conversation which he had had with one of the semi-independent Maharajahs, Patiala, I think. Patiala had said to him : "Maconachie, British India must become, in due course, Indian. But can you imagine *an Indian* coming to me with the orders of the Central Government? Why, I'd kick him downstairs!" The inference was that English Political Officers would be retained for this dangerous service long after the rest had gone. But how wrong he was! After 1947, Indians *did* come with the orders of the Central Government and they were not kicked downstairs! Instead, the princes were kicked out, or at least deprived of most of their princely privileges. Meantime, Maconachie had passed on to become Sir Roy Maconachie, our Ambassador in Kabul.

I found the Indian officers holding Viceroy's commissions men of a very high standard. Memory is fallible, but a few remain clearly in my mind. The Regiment consisted of two Sikh squadrons, another of Dogras, and a fourth which ideally should have been half Pathans and half Panjabi Mussalmans. The Indian officers were of correspondingly different races and religion. Aslam Khan, the Ressaldar-major in my time, was a grand character. Of Pathan stock, he saw his duty and did it, without reservation or doubts of a political nature. Chatting in stables to him was a delight. During my time with the Regiment I passed the Higher Proficiency examination in Urdu, and so was quite early on familiar with the language. I soon found that what passed for Urdu or Hindustani in Calcutta was a very poor specimen of the language. Jaswant Singh, a Ressaldar, was of a very different type. He was far more sophisticated, and spoke English well. Aslam Khan was innocent of the language. Jaswant took me once to Lahore, to visit his son in the public school for princes' sons and the aristocracy generally in that city. I found the young man very pleasant. As Jawant and I passed the Lahore Club on our way to the school we noticed an English official writing on the verandah. On our way back we noticed him again, still writing. "What a very unpleasant way to earn one's living", he said, "writing, writing, writing." There spoke the active out of doors Sikh. Another Indian officer, a Pathan, described to me how he was present at the surrender of some

Germans, (he had recently returned from France). "They were mere boys, sahib," he said, "they were weeping (rote rote the)." Another, whose name I remember, because it was somewhat uneuphonious was Bugga Singh. He showed great bravery in Mesopotamia, and I think won a decoration. Their attitude to the younger British officers was both respectful and at the same time protective. I remember once when the squadron was practising digging trenches, I joined in, more to keep warm than for any other reason. "No, sahib", said one officer, "it is not proper that the sahib should dig." One incident I remember very clearly. A number of senior Indian officers had called at the house of Mrs. Sarel, the Colonel's wife, in D.I.K. I heard what sounded like a friendly altercation. They had wished her to accept a gift on some special occasion, I think it was an inlaid tray of some value. Mrs. Sarel who was as charming as she was beautiful, even into old age, was trying desperately to explain to the officers that the rules of the service made it impossible for her to accept it. They persisted and pleaded: "We shall be very disappointed, Ladysahib, if you do not accept." "But I cannot accept it", she replied, "Ressaldar-sahib, it is a hookum of the Sirkar", or words to that effect. It went on some time, until at last the officers went slowly and sadly away. The rule that gifts may not be accepted was of long standing in Indian services, but it placed one in some awkward quandaries from time to time. The rule was that if politeness occasionally made it impossible to refuse, the gift must then be paid in to the Government Treasury.

It was a standing practice that one squadron of the four was always on garrison duty at Tank, a station forty miles west of D.I.K., which was only seven miles from the Mahsud border. On one occasion when I went with the squadron, we had to make a forced march, as it was said that 7000 Mahsuds were marching on Tank. We arrived and found that there was only a small garrison in Tank, since part of the infantry troops of the garrison had had to enter the Mahsud country. We set to work to build a sangar, which is the type of fortification usual in this hard rocky soil. It consists of stones piled on stones. We got ready and waited, but the enemy did not come. But news came that a young English Lieutenant had been killed in the pass, and for the first time in my life I saw a Commanding Officer (of the

Infantry detachment left behind in Tank) weep unashamedly in Mess. Later on a formal punitive expedition was arranged against the Mahsuds. I had been in residence at Tank for some time when the expedition started. Major-General A.W. Barratt came to Tank with his military secretary, and made it his headquarters. Now when I had gone to Tank, where each officer had a small wooden hut for his quarters, I had decided that I might as well make my three months there as comfortable as possible. So I had bought a Persian rug for the floor (they were quite cheap), a bookcase, which I filled with books, and a coloured cover for the bed. General Barratt on arrival decided to make the acquaintance of the officers of the garrison, and went round the huts meeting each officer with his military secretary, Major Bateman-Champain. He looked into my hut and we became acquainted. They then left, and the military secretary murmured as he went out "A blooming boudoir !" However my comfortable surroundings did me no eventual harm, for I was given almost at once a minor staff appointment.

Quite a force was assembled, including a British Regiment. I could not help noticing how undersized many of the British troops seemed in comparison with many of the Indian forces. Of course it was the period of the first Great War, long before the Welfare State had inaugurated that great improvement of the physique of the British population which has resulted from the later reforms.

The punitive force penetrated to Wana and Jandola in the Mahsud country, but the expedition soon came to an end, until next time!

One very striking feature of Regimental life was the Durbar. The officers sat at one side of a large square, while Indian officers and men formed the other three sides of the square. Then matters pertaining to good order and comfort and general well-being in the Regiment were openly raised and discussed and where necessary decisions were given by the Colonel. The proceedings were of course in the vernacular, so that all could follow what was going on.

Among experts on the frontier whom one met during this period were the well known Handyside (a police officer) from whom Kipling's Strickland might reasonably have been drawn, and Captain Boyle, (later Colonel), whose stories of disgusting

Mahsud customs were quite unrepeatable. He was a member of the Regiment.

Discipline in Mess was, as befits a Lancer Regiment, never greatly relaxed. I remember Captain Acland, who later left the Regiment to do important civilian work, coming into Mess one day to a meal on an extremely hot day, and throwing off his coat. "Sorry, Acland", said Reggie Anderson, who was temporarily commanding, "put your coat on !" "It's too damn'd hot", said Acland. "Well, then, leave the Mess." Acland left. Then on one occcasion I was engaged in a warm argument on some point of military importance, and I took out of my pocket the little manual which contained the rules. I had to hide it as quickly as possible. I had committed an offence equivalent to smoking before the toast (as it was then) of the King Emperor.

The heat in Dera Ismail Khan in the hot weather was considerable. The legendary place on the North West Frontier for heat was Jacobabad, where the shade temperature was said to be sometimes 127 degrees Fahrenheit. D.I.K could not rival this, but it was sometimes very hot. I sometimes suffered from the heat in a way that I had never done in Bengal. Prickly heat became my scourge occasionally, since my skin accustomed to the damp steamy heat of Bengal could not rapidly acclimatise itself to the dry heat of the Frontier. Sometimes in the middle of the day I would go to my bungalow and sit for quite a time in cold water to get some relief, though I don't think any permanent relief came from this practice. To cover the short distance between my bungalow and the Mess I used a bicycle. At midday when going the few hundred yards involved for lunch, the sun beating down on the handlebars made them almost too hot to touch. Parades were at the worst time of the hot weather held at 5 a.m., and we were back in the bungalow with its shuttered windows by seven or seven-thirty. We dined late at night, say 9 p.m., often in the open air for the sake of the cool, or rather less hot, night breeze. One often slept on the flat roof of one's bungalow or house, or if that was not available, in the open air. Any one taking a very early ride could see nurses and patients outside a hospital asleep in the grounds. On one occasion I heard a story of a sleeper on the roof of a house walking or falling over the side, probably because he had imbibed too freely of potations before turning in. On a couple of occasions I had the experience of a tropical duststorm, which left one with grit or sand in one's mouth, hair, ears, clothes and everywhere. For a change once after going to sleep in a tent, I found that my feet stepped out into six inches of water.

Dera Ismail Khan was therefore an extremely uncomfortable place in the hot weather, and I remember that only one lady stuck it out my first hot weather. We lived in bungalows and married men were permitted to bring their wives, if they so desired. When I first joined the Regiment, I sent my wife off to stay with her brother in the Federated Malay States, where he was a civil servant. She joined me later. I remember an amusing remark by the Adjutant of the Regiment, Captain (later Colonel) Taylor, on whose right I was sitting for my first dinner in Mess. "Are you married?" he enquired, then, when I said "Yes", "Got any money with her?" he added, thinking perhaps that my style might be cramped as a married 2nd Lieutenant. I relieved his fears by explaining that I was being paid my civilian pay, and not that of a very junior Army Officer. That in fact was the very pleasant arrangement made for civil servants who joined the Army during the war. I believe many business houses adopted the same course. One could not live as a married cavalry officer on a 2nd Lieutenant's pay.

In 1917 two very efficient Australians came to join the Regiment. They were seconded from France. When they arrived, I met them, and invited them to my bungalow. My wife said to them "Can I lend you some sheets?" "Sheets, sheets," they replied, "what are they? We haven't thought of them for months." A joke, of course, but they had come straight from France. They became very efficient officers of the Regiment, though one of them, Hanna, was very unorthodox in his ways, and risked offending Indian prejudices. The other, Pender, was much more sensitive to Indian ways. Both did well in Mesopotamia.

I have nearly finished my story of life in the Regiment at Dera Ismail Khan. But one little episode on the Frontier cannot be omitted. A young Canadian officer, stationed with

British troops at Tank, had occasion to go to Lahore. He booked one of the few pony tongas available, in order to reach the railhead at Darya Khan. Now political officers, i.e. the governing hierarchy on the Frontier, had the right to pre-empt transport, and as a certain knight in the political service, Sir John Donald, needed to make the journey, he pre-empted the Canadian's tonga. About that time I was travelling to Lahore, and arrived at Darya Khan station to find in the waiting room, sitting by the fire, an elderly civilian of imposing presence. I was chatting to him, when in dashed the Canadian, very late for his train. Explaining why he was late, the Canadian said: "I was dished for my transport by a blasted political." "I'm sorry", said the Knight, "I am afraid I was that blasted political."

An event of some moment must also be chronicled. In March, 1917, the first aeroplane ever to descend in D.I.K. arrived. The comment of my Indian officers was to the point: "That's the end of the use of cavalry for reconnaissance!"

I close this part of my story by a further extract from the poem on the Regiment previously quoted :

"But never a word of the past, with its blood and
    its struggle and hate,
Arose in our midst to divide, or our soldiers' pride
    to abate.
We had eaten the Sirkar's salt, so what mattered
    History's lies ?
Sacred the Sirkar's "hukm", revered the Rissala's
    ties !
We were gentlemen all in our spirit, drew strength
    from the days of yore,
When sowars well-equipped came to join us, and
    ne'er was recruit so poor,
But he came with a horse and a saddle to the
    Regiment of his sire,
And was raised o'er the common herd by the
    sillidar's pride and fire,
Bringing his horsemen's trappings, and looking all
    men in the face,

And yeoman and yeoman's son he, the finest breed
of his race.

And so in the Sirkar's twilight (the Raj was still
mighty and great),

United we kept the Frontier, and ne'er did our
pride abate.

Hindu and Muslim and Sikh, and an Englishman here
and there,

We rode for the "Pultan's" honour and "Izzat"
that all could share,

All trusting our comrades beside us wherever we
bent our course,

Sundered by faith yet united in our glory of
PROBYN'S HORSE.

Late in 1917 the Regiment was ordered to Mesopotamia, and it was decided that Captain Campbell should be in command of the Depot, which should be established at Jullunder in the Panjab, and that I should be appointed Adjutant, later with the Acting Rank of Captain. Later on May Somerville, who married a daughter of the Governor of Burma (Cradock) took over.

We marched to Darya Khan and there entrained for the long haul to Jullunder. We British officers travelled first-class, and the Indian officers occupied 2nd Class berths. It was most interesting to see the Sikh squadron arrive with its Holy Book, the Granth Sahib, and place it reverently on a 2nd Class berth in the train, which had been specially reserved for it. It is curious how details remain in one's mind, but I remember distinctly that it was an upper berth. Sikh officers travelled in the carriage with it.

The train was occupied entirely by the Regiment, and stopped and started entirely at Campbell's command. I remember him commenting what a pleasant feeling of power the journey gave him.

We arrived at Jullunder and established the Depot there. It was a far more convenient spot than D.I.K., especially as the men's homes were not far off. We spent our time training, reinforcements who were needed for the Regiment in Mesopotamia, and generally handling the affairs of the absent Regiment. In the capacity of Adjutant I had a great deal of responsibility thrust upon me, and enjoyed it very much. Towards the end of my time, I had the pleasure of admitting (in the capacity of Adjutant) two among many other recruits to the Regiment. One was the son of Brigadier-General Baldwin. Another was the son of General Birdwood, of Anzac fame, whom many years later I was to know as Lord Birdwood (the second), an author and the writer of books on the Kashmir problem. Young Baldwin I was to meet many years later, when he stood in the dock at Norwich Assizes, charged with a serious motoring offence. I saw him before the trial, and gave him such comfort as one Probyner could give to another in such circumstances, and I am happy to say that after the jury had disagreed he escaped at the second trial with a fine. I was then an official of the Assize Court.

Jullunder was a very pleasant place in many ways. It was not very far from Amritsar, and still nearer to Kapurthala, the seat of the well known Maharajah of that name. On one occasion he invited all the officers and their wives (it was in the cold weather) and provided transport. It was an invitation for the whole day and evening. We were asked to bring lawn tennis kit and told that changing rooms would be provided.

On arrival I found that my wife, who was a good tennis player, was paired with the Maharajah of Faridpur, who was the chief guest, to play against the Spanish Maharani (our host's second wife), and the State professional. My wife did her best, but the Maharajah of Faridpur, either because he was a poor player or because he was diplomatic, ensured that the Maharani won. The palace by the way, was a miniature Versailles, many of the buildings being like their famous French originals. The toilets in the changing rooms were luxurious, with refinements that are perhaps better imagined than described. In the evening we dined with a brilliant assembly. I sat next to Major General Puran Singh, who commanded the State cavalry. He was good enough to ask me if some day I would inspect the cavalry whom he commanded. I was flattered, until I asked how many the cavalry were. "Sixteen", he replied.

There was a French lady present and conversation near her part of the table was in French, the Maharajah joining in in that language, in which he was fluent.

The after-dinner proceedings began with a speech by the Maharajah, proposing the health of his chief guest, the young Maharajah of Faridpur. In reply, the Maharajah of Faridpur replied in a speech, doubtless prepared by his Secretary, which he read from a very obvious manuscript. One finds that amusing, but after all, English to him was a foreign tongue, and how many of us would like to reply to a toast in a language not one's own ?

I found that one of the chief items of conversation was the competition between Kapurthala and Patiala, a rival though larger Sikh state, as to which could send a greater percentage of recruits to the Indian Army. Kapurthala said with great glee that having regard to the population of the two states his state had sent relatively a higher percentage than Patiala.

And that brings me to a little story. In the Adjutant's office we received a complaint that a Sikh recently recruited to the Depot had been enlisted while he was drunk, and did not understand what he was doing. Apparently he had repented of his action in enlisting, and had got the State to support his claim for discharge, whether after greasing palms or not we never knew. The State offered us *two* recruits if we complied in exchange. I believe we accepted the proposal. After all, it was advisable to keep relations with the State sweet.

I had two very disagreeable duties which I could not avoid at Jullunder. One was to supervise the public whipping or rather beating of a camp-follower. Corporal punishment in the Indian Army was abolished decades ago, even before it was ended in the British Army. But it was retained for camp followers or soldiers' servants, and a case of stealing having been found by court martial against a camp follower. I was deputed to supervise the punishment of 15 strokes with a rattan. I had to resort to books to find out the prescribed width of the rattan, and all the other regulations governing the punishment, and then the unhappy chap was tied to a tree in public, and with the soldiers watching what I fear was a very popular punishment I gave the order to lay on. It was soon over except for the unhappy victim, and I rode back to my bungalow.

The other duty was even more disagreeable. A young 2nd Lieutenant named Neal had been sent from England to reinforce the Depot, and eventually the Regiment. He was plucky and keen. When some unbroken horses came to us straight from the farm for training, he insisted on mounting one of them. In a flash he was unseated with a broken collarbone. He had another piece of bad luck. Brigadier-General Peebles used to go about the station and visit the clubs a good deal in Mufti. Neal often met him when himself wearing uniform, and would have been wise if he had found out who he was. He did not know, and ignored the General. Peebles got tired of being ignored, and one day stopped him and enquired: "Do you know who I am?" "No", replied Neal. "Well, then" said the General, "go and ask somebody!"

Some time in 1918 an application was pending on my desk from Neal for a fortnight's leave in, I think, Mussoorie. Under "purpose of the leave" he had put "to get married". In due course I forwarded the application to Brigade Headquarters in Jullunder, where the well-known Brigadier-General Dyer was then commanding with his military Secretary Major Briggs. Unfortunately for Neal, there was pending on the General's table for decision a letter from Neal's wife forwarded by War Office, London, asking why he did not maintain her from his pay in India. This was obviously awkward for Neal. I received orders to come with Neal to Brigade Headquarters. When we entered the General's room, without warning or any other remark, Dyer thundered at Neal: "Why do you want to marry two wives?" Neal immediately fell flat on his back in a dead faint. We got some ice and applied it to his bare chest. When he recovered, after a few more words which were quite useless as his offence was patent, I was ordered to go back with him to the Depot, and place Neal under open arrest. I had no idea how to do that, but I looked up the manual, and found the proper procedure, and complied with it. After two days, I got worried, and told Briggs that that state of things could not continue indefinitely, and that some charge of a formal nature must be brought, if he were to continue under arrest. I was then ordered to release Neal from arrest, without prejudice to re-arrest. Eventually, orders came that he was to return to England, and Neal departed. The story was, apparently, that he had met a rich lady in the Hills, and been induced by her wealth to get engaged. The banns had actually been started. He was even more in the soup because he had signed a form before being chosen for India, to the effect that he was not married. That was the last I heard of Neal, except that a pathetic letter came to me from his wife in England: "Dear Sir, can you please tell me why my husband had to leave the Indian Army? I understand it was due to some trouble with a lady, but I did not know that one could be put in prison for that!" All I could do was to refer the poor lady to the War Office, London, for information.

During my time at Jullunder, I took my wife for a brief holiday in Kashmir, which was quite accessible. The attractions of the journey past Rawalpindi and Murree, Uri and Baramullah, and the rest of the places en route have been so often described that I need not go over that ground again. Suffice to say that we had a wonderful holiday, in which I was able to shoot a black bear whose skin and head adorned my Indian drawing room for many years after that, while one of my cherished memories is that of my small baby son crawling into the room and edging round the room keeping as far from the teeth-filled head of the bear as possible. I had visited Kashmir once before as a bachelor, when I got large catches of fish in the Woollar Lake, and had lived in a houseboat, drawn up the river by men pulling. On the occasion I had had difficulty in resisting the invitations of the boatman to utilise the services of a woman he knew was available. Fortunately my Puritan upbringing and the knowledge that syphilis was rife in Kashmir came to the rescue. I remember that on that occasion I had carelessly gone without a cheque book, and became short of money. A native banker came to my help by accepting a cheque drawn on a piece of stamped paper. Such were the advantages of being a sahib in India before the Great War. Things changed after that when stuma cheques became not uncommon.

It may be mentioned that I heard of my bear because it had killed a cow, and I sat over the kill until it returned for another feed. I was told that this was unusual, but I do not known for certain. I was lucky to get one at all, as since I was on war-leave I was not allowed to penetrate into the interior more than a certain distance from a telegraph station.

I may here give a small example of feminine influence on military life. General Dyer had in the hot weather ordered the attendance of officers at a series of lectures (of a very interesting nature, by the way) to be given by himself, but had fixed the very unseasonable time of twelve midday for their delivery. As only mad dogs and Englishmen go out in the midday sun, we officers disliked the arrangement very much, especially as we were not all Englishmen. We decided to be diplomatic and got my wife to suggest to Dyer in the club over a drink that the hour fixed for the lectures was not very suitable. He changed the time at once to five, I seem to remember.

Some time about August or September, when it was thought that the war would go well into 1919, it was decided that I should take a shortened period of Staff Training at the Saugor Staff Cavalry Training School. So I saw yet another part of India. Our rides took us over the cotton growing soil of Central India, which for some reason was full of traps for the unwary horseman in the shape of holes into which a horse might put its foot. At the School we did all sorts of exercises designed to teach us the work of a junior staff officer. One of the exercises was a paper one, and we had, for instance, to show how (on paper) we would given certain transport convey a mixed force from one point to another. One officer, I remember, appeared to have done a remarkably successful piece of paper planning, until it was discovered that he had achieved his result only by putting camels into first-class passenger coaches ! We had also problems of military and other law to solve, in which I came out top owing to my legal training at Cambridge. Altogether it was a very interesting experience.

I took the opportunity of making with my wife the short journey from Saugor to Sanchi to see the Buddhist topes. Here I had the greatest piece of luck. The well-known Indian archaeologists Marshall and Foucher were actually on the site when we arrived, and told us all about the topes, or Buddhist monuments. Marshall was good enough to give me a signed copy of his book on Sanchi, in which, before we left Sanchi, I was able to point out a minor error which had somehow escaped his notice. While I was in Saugor, the influenza epidemic which killed two millions in India, and great numbers elsewhere in the world was at its height. Sometimes we rode through partly depopulated villages in the country round Saugor. When peace came, which it did while I was at the Staff College on 11th November, 1918, the Victory celebration, which we held on the parade ground was marred by the ever present thought of the frequent sudden casualties among the troops which were occurring. I returned to Jullunder, as soon as possible after the peace, and resumed my duties at the Depot. My demobilisation back to the Educational Service could not be arranged before 30th March, 1919, and as a result the political troubles which included the Amritsar riots and culminated in Dyer's drastic action in dealing with them began before I left.

Though Amritsar was so near us, we were not greatly affected in Jullunder. But I remember that once when I went to Amritsar to see the Golden Temple, before going inside and doffing my shoes, I stood outside the railing which surrounds it, and standing there to get a good view from the outside, I put my foot on the four inch high stone plinth in which the railing is set. I was at once directed by a Sikh passer by to remove my foot. I of course complied.

One very pleasant experience which I had when at Jullunder, whether before or after I went to Saugor I forget, was a visit which Campbell and I with one or two others, including my wife, paid to the home of one of our Viceroy's Commissioned Sikh officers. His name was Dalal Singh. He had made elaborate preparation for the visit by importing from Amritsar various pieces of English furniture, including an assortment of "thunderboxes" which we noticed passing us on the road. He was obviously a man of some standing in his district, and he did us proud. An enclosed space had been set apart as a place where we could splash water over ourselves. We naturally did not meet any of his women folk, but my wife said afterwards that when she was in the place of ablutions, which was not entirely covered from the sky, she saw eyes that peeped from a latticed window. We shot snipe on his land, and altogether enjoyed ourselves, especially taking note of a divinely cooked and extremely tasty snipe pie that was served to us one evening.

Altogether it was a memorable experience, and one illustrative of the excellent relations which prevailed between the British and Indian officers in the Cavalry Regiments.

I saw little of the Amritsar troubles, though of course I had met Dyer and Briggs, his Brigade Major. Like most people in India at the time I took sides in relation to the Amritsar killings, and unlike many people came down against Dyer. I could not but feel long before the Hunter Tribunal pronounced its findings, that he had used excessive force, and that his action was the decision of an honest but rather stupid man. I suppose it was my legal training, in which the correct function of the military power called in to aid the civil authority, had been dealt with thoroughly, which decided my view of the tragedy. And, though I do not remember the details now, I imagine the subject had not been ignored in my training at Saugor.

I had some time before installed my wife in Croydon House, Simla, which as mentioned before, was on Jakko Hill. She was to have our first child there, and in due course my son Condell Ivor was born on 17th April, 1919. I had previously proceeded to Calcutta on demobilisation on March 30th, but I was able to get up to Simla in time for the birth, probably because the College vacation began about that time. The journey to Calcutta was not without its possible excitements, since the day before I started, two British soldiers had been dragged out of the train and murdered (near Ambala, I think) and so one had a loaded revolver handy in case. But all was quiet on the journey.

My wife stayed in Croydon House all the summer, and before she left to join me in Bengal for the cold weather of 1919-20 I was able to visit her and spend the October vacation in Simla. Perhaps I may be allowed to quote from a long poem of mine, written many years after, called "Dead World Dream", to end this chapter, and to illustrate an emotional period of my life.

Heaps of bright mimosa spray
  Round a Himalayan bed !
Memory faints and fain would stay.
  All those lovely blooms are dead !

There within a cottage high
Anxious up on Jakko Hill
I again might hear a cry,
Cry for which I listen still.

Child of mine, 'twas thus you came
On that distant April day.
Westward, gilt with sunset's flame,
Glowed the peaks in proud array.

I might see you lying there :
Eyes of blue match azure sky.
With the gilded peaks your hair
Shines in golden rivalry.

High durbar I see you hold :
Khitmagar, massalchi, ayah,
Bearer, syce and durwan old
Round you watching never tire.

Once again I'd hear the monkeys
Roaming, break your sleep above,
See the red sirkari flunkeys
Wrap you in their simple love.

The reference in the concluding verse is to the time when, hearing a noise in the room above where my son was sleeping I rushed up and found the room full of Jakko Hill monkeys, which had entered through the open window. The last two verses place on record a facet of family life in India which many parents of children born in India cherish as one of their loveliest memories of their Indian life.

6

COLLEGE PRINCIPAL AND ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

(1919-1922)

When I reported back for duty with the Education Service in Bengal, I was posted as Principal, Hugli College. Hugli was an ancient trading post of the Portuguese, which had been sacked by the Moguls as long ago as 1632, so it had a long history. The town was about 30 miles north of Calcutta. The College was a smallish one as Colleges go in Bengal, and I was told at the time that I should not be there long. I was Principal there for such a short time, about six months, I think, that I can remember very little of my experiences there, probably because I had very few of them.

One of the first things I had to do after, or even before arrival, was to purchase a cow, and hire a cowman to look after it. I was taking my wife when the cold season began, and as there was a young child a good supply of milk was essential. I seem to remember paying 100 or 120 rupees for the animal. After a few days, I began to think that the amount of milk which the cow gave was rather small, and I announced my intention of watching the milking process. I was at once informed that if I did that the cow's milk supply would dry up, as my presence would alarm the animal. I acknowledged defeat. Not that I believed the rubbish, but I thought it best not to interfere with the established customs of the country, as long as a reasonably adequate supply was forthcoming. After nine months or so, when I returned to Calcutta, I sold the cow for 75 ruppees, the purcahser assuring me that it would live in his house and be treated as one of the family.

While I was at Hugli, I had pleasure of being entertained to dinner, along with J.N. Roy of the Indian Civil Service, by the French Governor of Chandernagore. It was quite amusing to sit in his dining room and look out through the window on to this tiny piece of French territory. Needless to say, we required no passport to enter Chandernagore. Gazing through the window, one saw a street labelled in huge letters "Rue de Benares", though Benares was 300 miles away. It was piquant to realise that the Governor's salary was probably smaller than that of either of his two guests. We talked in French which Roy knew pretty well, while I was well beyond public school standard.

The College was close to the river Hugli, one of the exits of the mighty Ganges. Sometimes I watched the river idly, thinking of the chequered history of Hugli and of the struggle for trade which the river had seen. Sometimes in broad afternoon day-light I would suddenly observe a man or men, generally Eurasian or as we called them (by decree) Anglo-Indians, crossing the river in full evening dress. I knew then that there was a Masonic Lodge near, and that the men in the boat were on their way to it. Dress in Masonic Lodges was very formal at that time, but standards were greatly relaxed after the second World War in England, and perhaps in India.

As I gazed upon those waters, I could not foresee that an appalling tragedy would take place in those same waters which would pave my way to unexpected and in the circumstances certainly undesired promotion.

In 1920 I was ordered to Calcutta, to take up the post of Assistant Director for Muhammadan Education, in succession to J. A. Taylor, the first occupant of the post. The post had been created as compensation to the Muslims of Eastern Bengal for the loss of their separate political entity as a sequel to the changes inaugrated by the King Emperor in 1911.

I had an office in Writers' Buildings, and was part of the administrative staff of the Education Department. There was another Assistant Director, whose duties were not confined to one particular religion, as were mine, and above us both was the Director, who in 1920 was W.W. Hornell. The latter had been a member of the Calcutta University Commission, which had produced a Report which recommended many changes, which were quite impracticable for financial reasons, but which was for years our Bible or authoritative Book of Reference when matters concerning the University came up for administrative decision.

The Assistant Director had considerable powers whithin certain limits, and signed quite a lot of letters himself. This was amusingly illustrated in the case of J.A. Cunningham, an Assistant Director of several years previously. Every recruit to the I.E.S. in Bengal was under an obligation to pass a fairly stiff examination in Bengali within two years of his arrival. Cunningham had failed to pass his examination within the prescribed time. So he wrote to himself a letter asking why he had not complied with the rules. He wrote back a letter to himself saying that he had been so busy as Assistant Director (which was certainly true, since it was an arduous post) that he had not had time to study the language. Both letters were then filed.

As Assistant Director for Muhammdan Education it was my duty to visit schools and colleges in Bengal, both East and West, to see that Muslim Education was properly looked after in those institutions. Special schools and Colleges had been inaugurated in areas where Muslims were numerous. They were called respectively "Maktabs" and "Madrasas". The burden placed on Muslim pupils was often very great. Arabic was the religious language of followers of the prophet, Persian the cultural, Bengali was their mother tongue, English was essential for study in Madrasas or Colleges, while Urdu or Hindustani was desirable as the lingua franca of Northern India. Of course it was impossible to learn all these languages but many Madrasas attempted far too many of them, with results that were far from happy.

In the course of my work I visited most of the Colleges and Madrasas of Bengal. My visit to Bankura in South Bengal brought me into touch with Edward Thompson, later Principal of the College, and a well-known novelist, historian, poet and publicist. He had come out to India on the staff of this (Wesleyan) College, but his loss of faith (at least that was my conclusion) and his deep knowledge of the ills of India, and of the defects of character which he saw in many Indians, had imposed a kind of schizophrenic melancholy upon his character.

His College was mainly Hindu, with few Muslims, and when I discussed the problems of the latter with him, I discovered that though he knew Hindu life through and through he knew little of Muslim life. In fact when I mentioned Maktabs (pronounced muck-tubs) to him, he had never heard the word, and said "What a queer name for a school !" He must have learned much later, for Garratt and Thompson's History of India was a most competent book. In "Suttee" he gave a valuable account of the rite. His "Other side of the Medal" told the story of some events in the Indian Mutiny, with stress on the atrocities (there were of course some) committed by the avenging army against the mutineers. His apologia for the book was that the ordinary histories stress the atrocities committed by the mutineers against the English. In "The End of the Hours" and other stories he put Bankura College into the story under the name of "Vishnugram College", and himself as Alden, a member of the staff. They exhibit him as a deep sympathiser with the sorrows of India, but with a clear appreciation of some of the defects of its people. He attempted rather unsuccessfully novels of English life in England, but he told me many years later that he had come to the conclusion that he was not a good novelist. He wrote a book called "Atonement" after the Hunter Commission's verdict on Dyer's handling of the Panjab crisis in 1919, a title which suggests its subject matter. He also wrote poems and dramas. Finally, he knew Tagore well, and wrote a life of the poet.

Thompson served in Mesopotamia, and told me a story which he said he had put in one of his books on the campaign. It was to the effect that after an engagement at Beled where the British had been victorious but with substantial casualties, he and several officers were discussing what should be the form of the report to Headquarters of the engagement. "Why not simply 'Sanguinevi' ?" suggested Thompson, having obviously in mind Napier's alleged "Peccavi".

I saw Thompson in later years when he was lecturer in Bengali at Oxford, with a fellowship from Oriel. He lived on Boar's Hill, next to the poet Bridges. He lived long enough to suffer the heartbreak of the murder of his son by Bulgarian partisans while on a mission there in connection with the Second World War.

I hope I may be permitted to append here my tribute to Edward Thompson written soon after his death in 1947.

EDWARD THOMPSON

obiit 1947

Alden is dead ! His dust in Oxford lies.
His spirit where ? Perchance with old Tagore
Santiniketan's groves he haunts once more
Sharing its hopes and deep philosophies,
Or on Boar's Hill poetic fantasies
With Bridges chaffers, or on that far shore
of Jordan or of Tigris red with war

His spirit broods on life's injustices.
Alden is dead ! Where shall we seek ? May be
In Oriel, Vishnugram or Delhi free
Where India yet exults in freedom won,
The freedom Alden wore his life to gain.
And never saw ? No ! seek the Balkan plain,
Whereon the cruel Bulgar slew his son !

Somehow, I cannot but feel that Thompson burnt himself out with a passion for the righting of India's injustices, as he saw them, and yet somehow felt in his inmost thought that India was unready to assume the terrific responsibility of taking up the burden which British abdication would lay upon her.

During my first year in the office, a notification came down from Simla War Office stressing the advisability of arranging lectures on Indian History for the British troops in the Calcutta Fort who had recently arrived from England. The communication said that it was most desirable that the troops should know something of the history of the country to which they had come, and invited the Director to try to arrange such lectures. Volunteers were asked for. In the result I offered my services, and in due course found myself giving the first of a series of five lectures to the troops in Fort William. My first lecture was on "India 2000 years ago." The second was on Mediaeval India. The remaining three were on the modern period, with one lecture devoted to the Indian Mutiny.

I started off the Mutiny lecture by narrating the story of the British soldier, who shortly after arrival started shooting at all and sundry among the indigenous inhabitants of the land whom he met. When hauled before the Colonel for his conduct, he pleaded: "But look what they did to us in the Mutiny !" "Good Heavens, man, that's fifty years ago." "But I've only just heard of it", said the soldier. It was an old chestnut, but it started us off on the right food.

In the course of the Mutiny lecture, I mentioned, inter alia, the death of Sir Henry Lawrence in the siege of Lucknow, killed by a round shot, and said that Brigadier General Inglis succeeded him. In giving flesh and bones to narrative, I mentioned that Inglis had his wife and baby son with him in the siege, and that the family came through the ordeal successfully. At the close of the lecture Colonel Wetherall who commanded the main body of my audience, the 32nd Cornwall Regiment, came up with a young man, and said : "May I introduce Lieutenant Inglis, the son of the baby about whom you were talking." The 32nd Cornwalls had defended Lucknow in 1857, and young Inglis had joined his grandfather's regiment, and so was in my audience in 1920. Connections with the Mutiny of that kind were always interesting. I knew of another about that time. Delafosse was Vice-chancellor of Allahabad University. His father, Lieutenant Delafosse was one of the four men who escaped the massacre of Cawnpore Ghat by swimming and drifting down the Ganges until they reached safety.

Sir Probhash Mitter was at this time the Indian Minister who was, under the Diarchical system (introduced by the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms), in control of the Education Department. He was responsible for a delightful quip in the Legislative House some time before I myself sat in that assembly. Sir James Donald (then Mr.) as Home member of the Government of Bengal, had made a speech in the House on a financial matter. Now Donald was a Scot who had never lost the rather Doric quality of his Scots accent. He was therefore not always easy to follow. Said Sir Probhash : "I regret, Mr. President, that I could not follow the speech of the Honourable Member who has just sat down, but perhaps that is because *neither his nor my mother tongue is English.*"

I must now return to the subject of my Fort William lectures. Colonel Wetherall appreciated them greatly, and in due course I received a request that they should be printed. The Army guaranteed to purchase 1000 copies at a price which they fixed. I ran off with the local agent of one of the big London publishing firms the necessary number of copies, retaining only a very few for myself and my friends. The book was entitled "Glimpses of India's History". Unfortunately by accident or bad luck all my few copies were lost, and the only copy now known to me to exist is that in the India Office Library, London.

This was my third book. As a few years before I had been asked to contribute a chapter on "Anglo-Indian Literature" to the Cambridge History of English Literature, I was by now reasonably launched into authorship. Since 1914 I had been an occasional contributor to the Calcutta Review, a publication with a long history behind it, which was shortly to come into the possession of the University of Calcutta.

In due course Hornell put the book up to Sir Probhash Mitter, both for information and for permission for me to accept the 1000 rupees profit which had come to me from the sale of the book to the Army. Hornell thought highly of the book, and was pleased that one of his subordinate staff had produced it. Mitter was a trifle lukewarm, saying in a note that it was excellent considering those bit of a left-handed swipe, but on the whole I considered it fair comment.

My contributions to the Calcutta Review were as follows :—

1914 : German Theories and English Facts, A Study in Anglo-Indian Melancholy

1916 : An Eighteenth Century View of British Rule in India.

R. N. Gilchrist, J. W. Holme, W. C. Wordsworth, T. O. D. Dunn and many other members of the Indian Educational Service contributed to the Journal at this time.

I ceased writing when I obtained my commission and left Calcutta, but I made one more contribution before I became too busy with office work to write.

In July 1920 I contributed an article under the title "England's Indian policy". It was the fifth and concluding lecture of my five lectures in Fort William.

In the lecture I of course had to face the problems of the future. In the concluding paragraph I quoted the words of the Montagu-Chelmsford report: "England may be proud of her record in India. She should have even greater reason to be proud of it in future. Because the work already done has called forth in India a new life, we must found her government on the co-operation of her people, and make such changes in the existing order as will meet the needs of the more spacious days to come . . . . going forward with good courage in the faith that because our purpose is right it will be furthered by all that is best in the people of all races of India."

I ended my lecture with the following words:

"By all the lessons of our history, by all the ideals which we hold dear, we are bound to rear, like Akbar, a temple—a political temple of a magnificence and deep spirituality such as Akbar never dreamed of. For that is what we are doing; we are seeking to give India, not a new religion, but a new political faith, in the bosom of which her most high-souled patriots may find refuge; we cannot avoid our duty and our destiny, even if we would, of carrying our work to its logical conclusion; and so, though some may fear lest we are destined to watch those that follow 'loosen, stone by stone, all our fair work', and history repeat once more one of its dismal failures, it is necessary that we, one and all, strive and believe and hope that the great heart of India will prove itself sound; and that somehow or other, though we cannot yet see clearly through the mists and miasmas of danger and difficulty that surround the path, our mission, noblest and grandest in the history, will yet march undeviating to its appointed end."

In an earlier part of the lecture I had devoted some space to explaining to the soldiers whom I was addressing the implications of the announcement of 20th August 1917, which promised "responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire." I made it clear to them, as has become abundantly clear since that time, that "the process outlined here does really imply the beginning of that gradual withdrawal of British control, which Munro suggested a hundred years ago", and I then tried to elucidate for the benefit of my audience what in the given circumstances was the duty of the British Army in India, and made it clear to them that for many years to come there would be plenty for the Army to do, as indeed in fact it proved.

Well, well, "we were dreamers, dreaming greatly", as Kipling put it. I fear that our dreams for India's future would have been less uninhibited, and the aspirations of her peoples might have been pitched less high, if we and they could have foreseen in 1920, twenty-seven years before freedom came to India, that within twenty years of the attainment of that dream the Muslim and the Hindu parts of the sub-continent would be at war with each other over Kashmir, that the new India would have been shorn of considerable strips of frontier territory by China, that India's reluctance to kill rats and cows combined with a great increase in population would have made her increasingly unable to feed herself, that the new Pakistan would maintain increasingly cordial relations with China, India's enemy, and that India's insistence on Hindi as the national language would increase the drift in the southern states towards separatism.

On August 11th, 1920, my second child was born. For the event I had placed my wife in a house in Darjeeling. I had tried to get up to Darjeeling to be with my wife at this trying time, but I had, owing to the demands of my work, to try to judge things rather finely, and I was too late by a few hours. The poor soul had to face the ordeal with the help only of the midwife and her staff of servants. I arrived at Darjeeling station soon after midday, on the 11th, and was met by my bearer, whom I had lent to my wife for the occasion. He spoke one word, "Mila", meaning "got it" or "its come". Strictly it should have been "Mile", the plural, as twins had been born, but the bearer, either because his Hindustani was so bad that he did not go in for plurals, or because he realised that one of the twin daughters was still-born, used the singular. When the doctor came the same day later on, he showed me a small box with the dead baby inside, and told me to dispose of it. I gathered from him that no special formalities were needed, so I decided to bury the dead child myself. No other hands should give the child the last rites. So when it became dusk, I climbed a lonely hill at the back of the house, observed by none, with a spade. I dug in the hillside as deep as I could, placed the box in the hole, filled it up, placed a large heap of rocks and stones upon the grave, looked up at the stars and the snowy range of the Himalayas still visible, said a little prayer and went back to the house. My surviving daughter, Pamela Joan, lived to become the wife of Dr. Fisher of Canada, and gave me four grandchildren.

The whole incident left a profound impression upon my mind. In later years I referred to it in two of my poems.

First, in "Dead World Dreams", I wrote :

I might peer through tears that blind,
See a little coffin lie,
See Fate kind and yet unkind:
O'er the grave I'd breathe a sigh.

Earth to earth : the stars shine bright
Coldly still eternally.
Finite joins the infinite,
One with earth and sea and sky.

In [a forty stanza poem entitled "To a still-born child", I wrote :

Child of mine, I prayed alone,
As I dug the little hill,
And then, piling stone on stone,
Laid you where you're sleeping still.

Kinchenjanga's mighty glory,
Gleaming white beneath the sky,
Crowned, my child, your fleeting story
With its noble majesty.

There I left you, child of mine,
Life that ceased ere life began,
Bidden sadly to resign
You untimely for a span.

Soon United, you and I,
Kinchenjanga, earth and sun,
Shall share all eternity,
Indistinguishably one.

I forget how long I occupied the post of Assistant Director for Muhmmadan Education, perhaps a year or eighteen months.

It was a satisfactory post, in that it gave one a great opportunity to travel and get to know the various parts of Bengal. I was able, for instance, to visit Dacca, the old capital of Eastern Bengal, and on the eve of becoming, in compensation for its loss of status, which the Muslims felt intensely, the seat of a University. I remember that once I stayed with W.E. Griffith, the expert on Training College, and on that occasion experienced a tropical cyclone. We rushed to close the shutters of the room in which we were sitting, and it was only with our united strength that we were able to force the shutters to close against the terrific strength of the wind which had blown up almost without warning. Had we not been able to close the shutters everything in the room would have been tossed about and some of the furniture might have become matchwood.

Griffith, who had been in India some time before I arrived, had founded the Training College system in Bengal. His main achievement was the David Hare Training College for secondary school teachers. It took its name from the famous pioneer of English education in the first half of the nineteenth century, who was a watch maker. I regarded Griffith as a friend throughout my period of service, and I am glad to record that before he died about two years ago, at the great age of 90, I was privileged to have tea with him with my (second) wife only a month before that event. He never married, but I do not think he was ever lonely, since he lived in the past, and kept up connections with many of his old pupils.

I think it was soon after I had given up the post of Assistant Director for Muhammadan Education, and been appointed to the more important and certainly more arduous position as Assistant Director that the Spry Committee was appointed to advise on economies in the Government expenditure on Education. Spry was a member of the Indian Civil Service. His colleagues in the Committee were Sir Radhakrishnan Mukherjee, a prominent Calcutta industrialist, and Sir Campbell Rhodes, a local business man who, I think, sat in the legislature. The Committee proposed to destroy Griffith's life work by abolishing Training Colleges and spending the money on the schools. There has always been in public school and many other circles in England a profound disbelief in the value of teacher training.

Indeed in some Educational circles it was sometimes considered that the possession of a training diploma was a handicap in applying for a post. Training of teachers has now come into its own and is recognised as well nigh indispensable. But it was otherwise in 1922. Though some may have thought that in the special circumstances of Bengal training was a luxury which Bengal could not afford, most people thought the Committee's proposal outrageous. I sprang to Griffith's rescue both on personal grounds and on grounds of principle. I acted in two ways. I put up my views to the Director in a strongly worded note, and he endorsed my views, so that in the end the proposals came to nothing. But I acted in another way. I decided to influence public opinion through the "Statesman". I published in its columns a purported Socratic dialogue—a dialogue between Socrates and three Greeks named Spruos, Mukros and Rhodios, which were obviously thin disguises for the three members of the committee. It was anonymous, and only R.N. Gilchrist was let in to the secret of its authorship. It ran on familiar Socratic lines, e.g.

Socrates : If we wish to make a man a carpenter, must he not be trained in wood work ?

Spruos : True, O Socrates.

Socrates : And if we wish to have an army able to defend the state, must not the soldiers be trained in the use of weapons ?

Rhodios : You speak truth, O Socrates.

Socrates : And if we wish to get fish, must not men be trained in the use of boats ?

Mukros : Again I cannot controvert the argument, O Socrates.

Socrates : And is not teaching an art or skill, just as fishing and woodworking and the military art ?

Spruos : We cannot deny what you say, Socrates.

Socrates : Therefore, if we wish our children to be taught, must not the teachers be trained in teaching ?

Rhodios : It would appear so, Socrates, but we are very busy men, and we cannot stay to discuss the matter further.

I cannot assert that these were the exact words of the article in the "Statesman", of which I have not a copy for reference, but this represents the gist of what I wrote at much greater length.

Gilchrist informed me that Campbell Rhodes went about the Club asking all and sundry : "Who wrote it ? Who wrote it ?", but he told me he never disclosed the secret.

It is difficult to recollect very much of the work which I did as Assistant Director. The post demanded that one make an immense number of routine decisions of no great importance daily, and only occasionally did something crop up which demanded the Director's attention, and had to be put up to him. During his absence on tour, one frequently had to take decisions which were urgent for him in his absence. Apart from absences on tours, the Director was a very busy man. He had to sit as a nominated member of the Bengal Legislature, attend meetings of the Calcutta University Syndicate and Senate, in which Sir Asutosh Mookherji, the Vice-Chancellor, walking like a Colossus amid petty men, was the dominating influence. I think that at this point I might elucidate the position of the Department vis-a-vis the general education of Bengal.

The Department was in no sense responsible for the whole of the education of Bengal. In regard to primary education the Department aided the District Councils with grants, so that with the help of grants the Councils were responsible for primary education. The Department through its Inspectorate kept a general eye on their work. Regarding secondary or higher school education the University by its power to prescribe courses and subjects of examination, and through the Matriculation Examination, controlled secondary education. The Department maintained some twenty-four well equipped and staffed secondary or high schools as models, and aided with grants many others. But a large proportion of the high schools of Bengal were quite independent of the Department relying on fees and local help for their upkeep, and controlled only by the University in the manner previously mentioned. As regards College education, the Department maintained a number of Colleges and Madrasas, like the Presidency College, the Sanskrit College, Calcutta, the Calcutta Madrassah, the Sibpur Engineering College, the David Hare Training College. Calcutta, the

Bethune Ladies College, and others, but here again many Colleges were private institutions aided by the Department, and some took no aid at all, relying on fees for support. Some of the private Colleges were great and famous institutions like the Scottish Churches College, Calcutta. The Department maintained a great school, of a residential character, at Kurseong, on the hill railway to Darjeeling for European and (new-style) Anglo-Indian children. It gave a substantial grant to Dr. Graham's Kalimpong Homes for European and Anglo-Indian children, some of them the result of mixed unions, not always legalised. Dr. Graham arranged his boarders in houses of thirty, and the students all presented one peculiarity. They had no shoes on their feet. Dr. Graham told me that he saved 6000 rupees annually by this practice. Dr. Graham when I visited the Homes told me a curious story. He said that one of his staff, a reverend gentleman, who shall be nameless, had been talking about circumcision in sermons and lessons without having the slightest idea of what the rite implied. This diversion has taken me a long way from my explanation of the precise position of the Department in Bengal education, but I had about finished.

I will however mention the fact that there were, to the best of recollection, 2000 high schools and 50000 primary schools in Bengal. As there were nearly 50 million people in the province, this worked out at one primary school (generally quite small) for each thousand of the population, and one high school for each 25000 of the population.

Away to the West, in Chota Nagpur, was a relic of old days when Bengal and Bihar were united. It was a Reformatory School, to which young criminals were sent for training. It was splendidly equipped with all sorts of machines on which good technical training could be given. I was told on the one occasion when I was able to visit the institution that pupils were so satisfied with the training received there that when they became fathers they got their sons to commit petty crimes so as to be admitted to their fathers' old school. A new light indeed on the old school tie link !

I will record one curious incident here, though I cannot quite be sure when it took place. As I have already stated the University of Calcutta was responsible for the conduct of the Matriculation Examination the passing of which was a necessary qualification for entrance to a College of the University. One morning when the examination was either imminent or had already begun we woke up to read in one of the Bengali owned newpapers the questions for some of the ensuing examinations. The University at once postponed the examination and the papers were re-set. Again they leaked out and, I believe, were, some of them, published in the paper. The University turned to the Government in despair. Government appointed a special officer of the Indian Educational Service, Biss, to supervise the printing of the papers. Lord Ronaldshay, the Governor, summoned Biss to a special interview, to impress on him the awful consequence of failure, should the papers again get out. Said Lord Ronaldshay : "You know, Biss, if there's another leak, it will be your funeral", or words to that effect. "Yes Sir, I realise that perfectly. And if I succeed ?" said Biss, with visions of a promise of a C.I.E., or something similar. "O, well, then you carry on !" replied His Lordship, committing himself to nothing. I believe that Biss went to Delhi for the printing to be done, got an armed sentry from the Army, practically lived on the premises night and day, and eventually took the papers to the University authorities. There was no leak.

There were many stories told at the time about the ingenious methods which printers sometimes adopted to sell their precious information to their own advantage. One of the stories was to the effect that one scantily clad printer always sat on the type and though he did not understand what he was setting up, was able successfully to publish himself in the Bazaar, for cash !

7

LAST TWO YEARS AS ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

(1922-1924)

Time wore on, and though I spent about three years as Assistant Director, very few matters of interest stand out.

The job was arduous with long hours and there was little opportunity for travel, or for holidays in Darjeeling or elsewhere. My wife lived in Darjeeling during a great part of the year for the sake of the children, and indeed on one occasion, owing to housing difficulties, passed a whole winter there. I found Darjeeling in the winter incredibly beautiful. The air was crisp, and sometimes there was snow, though it seldom lasted long, except where the sun could not get at it. I remember our two babies once romping naked in the snow, the heat of the sun making this exercise by no means uncomfortable. No clouds obtruded between Kinchenjunga and the viewer, and in the clear air the mountain range seemed incredibly near, though it was fifty miles distant.

I had joined both the United Services Club and the Calcutta Club. The former was confined to the Naval, Army and Civil Services and was a white club. The Calcutta Club was open to Indians and Europeans alike. The Calcutta Club had excellent tennis courts, and by offering the club professional cash if he beat me I steadily improved my game. I played golf at Tollyganj, but I never became a good player. Something in my temperament perhaps clashed with the game, for otherwise I was a fairly good athlete.

One of our annoyances in the office was the preparation of answers to questions in the House. Many of them were designed to harass, and did not genuinely seek information. I remember one question about that time, though it was not in the

Education Department, and so we had no say in framing the answer. It ran : "Is it correct that the fat of boa constrictors is being sold in the Darjeeling Bazaar for the purpose of being made into ghee (cooking fat) ?" Rumour said that Lord Ronaldshay the Governor had a hand in the answer. *Answer* : It is understood that boa constrictors are found in South America, and it is thought unlikely that they would be imported into India for the purpose stated."

Although I cannot remember dates accurately, I believe that Wordsworth acted for a time as Director at some time during my tenure of the Assistantship, and I was able to see something of his work. He was undoubtedly a very able man, and his subsequent passing over when the Directorship fell vacant was somewhat undeserved. But I think he got across the powers that be by his unconventionality, his lack of business like habits, and his method of presenting papers for a decision from the Secretariat. Sometimes he did insufficient work on a mass of papers which required a decision, and put them up in a form which left the Secretariat a good deal of work to do on them before a decision could be reached. This is why in my opinion Wordsworth did not get the post. At the same time it is to be remembered that the post had seldom in recent years gone by seniority, had even earlier on been held by an Indian civilian, and that the authorities always felt they had a free hand.

Referring again to questions in the House, on one occasion we were harassed in the office by having to prepare answers to 150 questions on education. Some of the questions were quite impossible, e.g. "How often has corporal punishment been administered in high schools during the year ?" I give this question as a type since I naturally cannot now remember the exact questions asked. We could avoid work on some of them by the time-honoured device of saying that an answer could not be given because the time and effort needed to collect the information was more than the value of the information would justify. But on some of them a great deal of work had to be done in preparing the answer, and it was more than galling when we found that the questions had been put merely to harass and that an answer would not be given as the questions would not be asked, when the time came. In one case this happened to 150 questions for which we had prepared answers.

During my time in the office, in 1922 an interesting Masonic event took place. Lodge "Star in the East" celebrated its two hundredth anniversary. This was a most unusual achievement, and the United Grand Lodge of England marked its recognition of its significance by sending our Lord Cornwallis, who bore a name wellknown in the annals of Bengal, with the title of Pro-Grandmaster to grace the anniversary with his presence. Cornwallis held the Provincial GrandMastership of Kent almost by hereditary succession, as his family has continued to do since his day. The accepted age of the Lodge implied that it was in existence even before the District Grand Lodge of Bengal was constituted in 1731. The action of the Grand Lodge of England in so honouring "Lodge Star in the East" was a remarkable tribute by that body to the value and antiquity of Indian Masonry. Before I leave the subject I may mention that during my time in the office my friend of old days in the Presidency College J.C. Coyajee took me as his guest to the inauguration, or as it was technically called the consecration of a new Lodge entirely confined to Parsis. We sat down to dinner, I remember, in a huge marquee, three hundred of us dining. Each member of the new Lodge contributed at the time of the consecration the sum of £10, a substantial sum in those days, towards the cost of the great Masonic Memorial Hall near Kingsway, London, thereby becoming a Hall Stone Lodge (to use the technical term) contemporaneously with its consecration, an achievement to which only three Lodges up to that time had attained. It may be explained that any Lodge which had given £10 per member to the Masonic Memorial Building was entitled to describe itself as a Hall Stone Lodge. The Parsis, it may be added, were the first of the Indian peoples to be attracted to the merits of Freemasonry as a socially valuable factor in the nation's life.

In 1922 I was able to visit England with my family for the first time in eight years, an absence longer than was general in those days, but attributable to the war, and the difficulty of getting a passage for some years after it. I got back to an England totally changed, a land in which one carried one's own luggage, and which was slowly recovering from its wounds. My mother had died in 1915, but my father was still alive and active at 66, and we had a very pleasant reunion. I established my family for the summer in a very pleasant house in Sevenoaks. My son was three and my daughter eighteen months. I remember one episode which I have never forgotten. From an upper window in the house I saw, as I thought, my small son of three teasing and torturing my daughter on the tennis lawn. I ran down to investigate, and on approaching my son in hostile mood, he completely disarmed me by saying : "Beat me, Daddy, I like it !" The sheer genius of the remark, which baffles me to this day, saved him from chastisement which he clearly deserved.

I had time to go over to France and Belgium accompanied by my nephew, my sister's son (who gave his life in the Second World War). We wandered about on the old battlefields, which were still incredibly cluttered with millions of shells, hundreds of stacks of collected wire, stumps of dead trees, ruined tanks, in fact so littered with the debris of war that one wondered whether the land could ever be restored to its civilised appearance. Our main object was to see whether we could obtain any information about my nephew's father, Lieut. S.R. Hockmott of the West Kent Regiment who was missing after an attack at Ypres three weeks before the end of the war. We wandered about the battlefield and asked questions of the local Belgians, but to no avail. My nephew's father's name is on the Ypres Memorial, as one of those who have no known grave. It was the fate of both father and son to die in wars, and my poor sister lived to endure both tragedies.

The year 1922 was marked by the visit of Prince Edward, Prince of Wales. Mr. Gandhi had decided to have a trial of strength over this visit, and did his best to arrange to have it boycotted. I remember that at the time there was a rumour that the Bengal Government had advised against the visit, and in the event it became clear that for the Prince the experience could not have been a very happy one. There were riots in Bombay between those who wanted to see the Prince and those who wanted to stop people seeing him. We need not believe the story that after the Bombay riots the Prince cabled his father : "Magnificent reception : ninety three killed and 200 injured." But many of us in Bengal certainly thought the visit ill-advised. I derived two experiences from it. About the time that the Prince was to arrive in Calcutta, I was patrolling the

Sibpur side of the river as a special constable. As we were temporary policemen, the question whether we should carry revolvers, which most of us possessed, was raised. There was a general demand that we should be permitted to carry them. Official permission could not be given, but we were told authority would look the other way if we did so. In the end most of us had a weapon in our pocket. The other experience was attendance at a luncheon given by the United Services Club to His Royal Highness. I was a member of the Club and so one of his hosts. The Prince made an excellent speech, which was uninhibited (there were no reporters present), and appeared to be impromptu, though no doubt he had prepared it beforehand. He told us service members (as he had no doubt already realised) that he appreciated the fact that in our work in India we were really up against it, and that his thoughts and sympathies would always be with us. I took no note, but this is the substance of what he said. After the meal was over he talked to several members, and seemed very natural and happy. Later I attended a dance at which he was present in Government House, and I seem to remember that he looked very handsome in the uniform of the Seaforth Highlanders. I hope memory has not misled me.

When I resumed work as Assistant Director in the cold weather of 1922-23 I soon sensed that all was not well between Lord Lytton, Governor of Bengal, and Chancellor of the University, and Sir Asutosh Mookherji, High Court Judge and Vice-Chancellor of the University. I suppose they differed in many ways, though I am not aware of the full story. I do know of one point on which they quarrelled, a petty point of procedure. At the ceremony of conferring of degrees it was customary, and I believe that Lord Lytton insisted on it, for the Vice-Chanceller to ask the Chancellor for permission to confer the degrees. This was too much like kow-towing for proud Sir Asutosh, who was very conscious of the dignity of his office. At all events the upshot of the differences between the two men was that Sir Asutosh resigned in 1923, and was succeeded by Sir Ewart Greaves, also a High Court Judge. Sir Ewart at once resolved the particular point of procedure by arranging for the Chancellor to say at Convocation, when the time for the conferring of degrees arrived: "Mr. Vice-

Chancellor, I now call upon you to confer the degrees", or words to that effect. It was a simple solution, which perhaps Sir Asutosh would have accepted.

Meantime the Government of Bengal, composed of *Members* for certain subjects, who were nominated and not dependent on support in the House for the retention of their portfolios, and *Ministers* for other subjects, including education (except European education), who were selected by the Governor as representing a majority in the House, and removable if they lost its support, rumbled creakingly on under the Diarchical System. During 1923 Hornell, I think, was increasingly looking for a way of escape from Bengal. He had done the main work for which he had been selected as Director, as a member of the University of Calcutta Commission. Its recommendations could not be implemented for years if ever, for financial reasons. 63 lakhs of rupees would be needed for the purpose and there was no prospect of that kind of money being made available. And I think Hornell could see no future for himself in Bengal. He disliked working under an Indian Minister. Bengal, too, was increasingly a backwater province, now that the Capital had been placed in Delhi. If, as I think he did, he dreamed of a knighthood, the Panjab or the United Province were happier hunting grounds, and he was stuck in by-passed Bengal. He had now been ten years in the Directorship, and I think he was restive. And finally, the feelings of his colleagues in the Department were not particularly cordial, and I think he felt he had little in common with them.

When he obtained the offer of the paid Vice-Chancellorship Hong-Kong University, I have no doubt that he was delighted. I do not think that Hornell was to any extent a great scholar, but presumably the Hong-Kong authorities wanted a man with executive ability and experience, and Hornell was appointed. Hornell was to appoint a Registrar to accompany him, and he offered me the job. But I preferred to take my chance in Bengal. In the end he took with him Finnegan, his most able Irish personal assistant, whose loss impoverished the Department at a time when he could not easily be spared, and made the task of Hornell's successor by that degree more arduous.

About a week before Hornell's departure from the office preparatory to taking up the appointment, he was away from the office on some tour or other. During that time a memorandum came from the Secretariat sending down a mass of papers on some subject of importance which I do not recollect. It may have been some aspect of the Calcutta University Commission's Report, or some proposals about the coming Dacca University. A comment by the Director was required within a week. Finnegan and I realised that Hornell could not possibly cope with the task before him when he returned, so we put aside all other work, and between us prepared an enormous mass of annotations on each of the various subjects, (I seem to remember some thirty or forty long notes) to await Hornell's return. When he came back to the office, he found the enormous file awaiting his orders. He sent the file up to the Secretariat simply writing on it: "In the short time available to me before I leave Calcutta, I cannot possibly give these matters the necessary attention. But Mr. Oaten has prepared these excellent notes, and they have my endorsment." I don't think he mentioned Finnegan's part in the annotations, though I had made it clear to Hornell that all of the notes were not my work, though it had all to go up under my signature. Anyway, Finnegan did not need the boost, and I did. It was very kind of Hornell, since he must have known I was a possible contender for his post.

Before this however each of the possible candidates or at least some of them had been invited to lunch with their wives by Lord and Lady Lytton. Lord Lytton had a good talk to my wife, and then to me. I imagine others went through the same ordeal, though I do not know for certain. Lord Lytton asked me who was the best candidate for the post. I mentioned one member of the service (needless to say, not myself), and said that in my opinion he had the best capacity for the post, though I was doubtful whether he desired it or would accept it, if offered.

Hornell departed, and for a day or two we were without a Director. I carried on the office. Then a communication came from the Secretariat saying that Theodore O.D. Dunn had been appointed. Wordsworth and I had both been unlucky, as also any one else whose name had been considered.

I at once telephoned Dunn, who was an Inspector of Schools, with an office in Calcutta, and offered him my warm congratulations saying that I would help him all I could. At once his high-pitched voice came back over the telephone. "O thank you, thank you, I shall never forget your kindness."

Theodore Dunn had acted, I think, twice for short periods as Director. He was the product of a Scots University, Glasgow, and rumour had it that he was once possessed of a Scots accent with a strong Doric quality. The story went that he had taken a speech training course which had removed his accent, and that he had acquired instead a rather exaggerated Oxford type of speech, which was however not unpleasant. He had read mainly English at his University, and was a competent writer of literary articles. He wrote a book on Bengali English verse, thereby ploughing much more deeply a field which I had scratched in my "Anglo-Indian Literature". He also contributed occasionally to the Calcutta Review.

In due course Dunn took his seat in the Director's room and became the Hon'ble Mr. T.O.D. Dunn, M.L.C., with a seat in the legislature, and a member of the Syndicate and Senate of the University of Calcutta. He rejoiced in his elevation, and also in the greater emoluments which he would now receive, saying that he would now be able to save 1000 rupees a month. When he made this remark to me, I am afraid I thought of T.B. Macaulay, another Scot, who when appointed Law Member of the Government of India at £10,000 a year, remarked that he could make a fortune in four years.

An immediate reaction to Dunn's appointment was the resignation of W.C. Wordsworth as Principal of the Presidency College, and from the Indian Educational Service. He was a man of such ability that he had a right to feel hurt at the decision of the Government, and he probably felt that Dunn was so comparatively a young man that the chance of the Directorship or of any really well paid post for him was remote. He had an offer to join the staff, (as Assistant Editor), of the local newspaper, "The Statesman", and he accepted it. The pay, which I believe was 2000 rupees a month was not so far below that of the Directorship, which was Rs 2400. At all events he burnt his boats, once for all, and went at once.

Then came the utterly unexpected. Dunn went up country on a tour of inspection to the Chinsura District. After visiting, I think, Hugli College, he entered a country boat to cross the river to the eastern side. On a flat surface on the boat a chair was placed in which he sat back, lit a cigar, and prepared to enjoy the crossing. Dunn was a rather heavy man. The boat lurched and the chair tipped back into the river, carrying Dunn in a backward plunge into its waters. The Hugli is well-known for its deadly underground currents, which render a plunge into its stream a risky adventure, even for a strong swimmer. His hat floated, but Dunn never re-appeared above the surface, and in spite of extensive searches up and down stream his body was never found.

On the 23rd August 1925 I had the sad duty of unveiling to Dunn's memory an obelisk erected at Chinsura subscribed for by the teachers of Bengal. On that occasion I included in my speech a poem which had been communicated to me written by Dunn's niece, his sister's daughter, aged 12, written after the death of Dunn:

See, the night cometh, the darkness slips down,
Evening is golden on still mountain's crown,
And a bird calling high, Oh! so high,
Knows the soul of a warrior lighteth the sky.

See the moon riseth, living am I.
Fools that ye think it so dreadful to die!
Listen, beloved ones, each has his hour;
God wanted me in my youth, in my power.

Ere age could touch me, misery hold,
Or wealth freeze my heart in a bondage of gold,
God the all-seeing leant from his throne,
And the soul of the ocean went up with my own.

See the day dawneth, weep thou no more,
Say, can you hear me? I stand at the door.
Out of deep darkness springeth this sorrow.
Joy flashes in on the wings of the morrow.

With such dignity and high courage was the tragedy faced by Dunn's kith and kin when the news of the event reached them.

he once did put up a letter for signature, stating that "my views go inside Mr. Hornell", when what I had dictated to him was "my views coincide with Mr. Hornell's". His only other lapse that I remember was a pure typing error : "I regret the delay in my answer, but I have been very *bust* this week."

One of my fears on assuming the Directorship was that of having possibly to contend with Sir Asutosh Mookherji in the Senate and Syndicate of the University when necessity arose. He had resigned the Vice-Chancellorship in 1923, but he was still to be reckoned with in University affairs. But on May 25th 1924 not long after I assumed charge of the Department, we heard that Sir Asutosh, returning from up country, where he had been on some errand, had become ill and had died. He was a great man in many ways, with the touch of arrogance which is sometimes an accompaniment of greatness, and had done much for the University, especially in the sphere of post-graduate education. He had left behind two capable people to represent him in University affairs, Rama Prasad Mookherji, his son, and Promatha Nath Banerji, his brilliant son-in-law. But both of these were old students of mine, and though I could not in any sense manage them, we knew each other well enough to be able to work together.

The first episode of my Directorship which I shall place on record is the story of how a speech delivered by Lord Lytton at the annual Convocation of the University came into existence.

One Thursday morning H.E.'s private Secretary (I think it was Wilkinson of the I.C.S.) rang me up to say that H.E. wanted to see me that afternoon. I duly attended Government House (in Calcutta) and found Lord Lytton stretched out wearily on a couch in tennis kit. He had been playing tennis and was exhausted. He told me that he wanted me to tell him what subjects he ought to touch on in his Convocation Speech which was on Saturday, two days ahead. I mentioned various subjects which he ought to mention, including Sir Asutosh Mookherji's recent death, and his loss to the University. We discussed several lines of approach to the speech, but he did not seem to be much interested, and was not really taking in what I said. I got worried, and at last I said : "Would you care for a draft speech to be submitted to you for approval ?" His face lit up with relief : he was tired out, not tremendously interested in the subject, and delighted to be relieved of all constructive effort. I think from the moment of my arrival he had been fishing for the offer.

He accepted the offer gratefully, and then somewhat dismayed me by saying that he must have the draft by 1 p.m. tomorrow (Friday), as he was fully occupied after that time, and must have plenty of time to study it. I suspect that he had insufficient confidence in my draft, and wanted to leave time for the Private Secretary or himself to cook up something suitable if my draft was not suitable. After all, he had no knowledge of my capacities as a speech writer.

I went home. It was about 4.30 or 5 p.m. I worked on the speech till 3 a.m. (fortified with plenty of coffee), rose again at 6 a.m., worked till 9 a.m., (the Convocation address had to be pretty long), then went to the office, and put three typists on the job of typing my Mss. It was done by half past twelve p.m., and I despatched it to Government House. Before it got there Wilkinson rang up about it in considerable anxiety. I was able to tell it was on its way.

I had put my heart into the draft. I had given it a literary flavour by lifting out of a speech by Gladstone a picture of seamen of old being guided by the twin stars Castor and Pollux towards their destined haven, and I applied it in a suitable fashion to the future destinies of the University. During the afternoon I was rung up about Castor and Pollux by Wilkinson. His Excellency wanted to verify the quotation. So I sent over my (Cambridge) prize copy of Morley's "Life of Gladstone", in which the speech is quoted.

But the real meat of the speech came in its peroration. I had decided that so far as I could influence matters, the hatchet between Lord Lytton and Sir Asutosh Mookherji should be decently if posthumously buried.

I put into Lord Lytton's mouth a substantial and emotional peroration, (which he delivered without change, as he did almost the whole oration) part of which I think I can reproduce from memory fairly faithfully:

"Finally, let us build a great temple of learning to his memory, (i.e. Sir Asutosh's memory) and let the foundation stone of that temple be a firm resolve that not one jot or tittle of the work which Sir Asutosh did for this great University shall ever be allowed to perish."

Well, Saturday afternoon came, when the speech or, at least, *a* speech had to be delivered. The members of the Syndicate were lined up to his right as Lord Lytton entered. First, he shook hands with the Vice-Chancellor, I was next in the order of seniority. As he shook hands he said, audibly "You're a brick!" Then he delivered the speech, and as he had considerable histrionic ability, he made my draft, with its purple passages almost unchanged, sound marvellous in my ears. Between us, we had pulled off an achievement. I think there was a certain assuagement of past quarrels. I have always understood that Lytton recommended me for a C.I.E., before he left India, but I was crowded out at the time, and left India too soon for the recommendation to fructify.

I should add that I subsequently received from Lord Lytton a personal letter in these terms : "Dear Oaten, I cannot adequately express to you my gratitude for your admirable draft Convocation speech. I am afraid that your reward will be that you will be called upon for this service in future years." As indeed I was. The practice continued into the time of Sir Stanley Jackson's Governorship. But that as will be seen in due course is another, and a very different, story.

The diarchical constitution had left to each individual Council the question whether it desired women to have the vote. The matter in due course came before the House. The Government decided to allow the House a free vote, so that we Government members of the Council were free to give our votes as wished, instead of supporting the Government line.

I discussed the matter with the Minister of Education, Sir Abdur Rahim, and J.H. Lindsay, the Secretary for Education, through whom my recommendations to Government passed on the way to the Minister, (Lindsay, by the way, was the brother of the well-known Master of Balliol of that name), and we found that we were broadly in agreement. Sir Abdur was a Muslim of the religion which had introduced the seclusion of women into India, a custom which the Hindus had widely followed, and we all took the view that in view of the "purdah" system which prevented women from going to meetings and the fact that a very great majority of women were illiterate, it would be premature to give them the vote. We all three voted accordingly, but were in the minority. I may add that my vote brought much opprobrium upon my head from my wife and many of her Anglicised Bengali friends. I believe that Asquith had to suffer similarly earlier in the century.

Another incident which occurred early in my tenure of the Directorship was a summon to attend the Bengal Cabinet. I think it concerned the recommendation of the Spry Committee that Training Colleges should be abolished and the money spent on school salaries. I was called in to enlighten the Cabinet on one point. Sir Abdur Rahman was the Minister in charge of Education at that time also, and he wanted support for refusing the proposed economy. Lord Lytton as Chairman put me the question : "Mr. Oaten, if the proposed economy is made" (detailing it), "by how much will the salary of each teacher in Bengal be able to be increased ?" I made my answer ready, but to increase its effect I, almost without thinking, put it in terms of English money : "By 2½d (two pence half penny) a month !" That settled the matter. I bowed myself out. My answer had been in line with Government policy.

Another Minister of Education under whom I served was named Byomkhesh Chakravarty. Somehow or other he had formed a Government which for a time commanded a majority in the House, or at least it was formed on that assumption. His time of office was rather stormy, with the Swarajist opposition making life a misery to him. He simply initialled all my proposals which went to him via Lindsay for approval. He never made a note or a suggestion, but simply accepted everything I put up. I began to think that he would initial a proposal from me that green cheese should be distributed to the schools, if by accident it slipped past Lindsay's observant eye. On one occasion I remember that he was prevented for, I believe, two days by huge hostile mobs from leaving his house. He left no impression on me except that of a man who was quite unfitted and incompetent to hold the post which fate and the exigencies of so-called representative government had imposed upon him. But in point of fact it was difficult in the face of Swarajist hostility in the House and outside to get anyone to be able to form and keep a Government going.

It may have been about this time that a disagreeable piece of administration was forced on me. A lady teacher in the Kurseong School for Europeans and Anglo-Indians went off her head. The Head Master could think of no other course but to accompany the lady on the 300 mile journey to Calcutta, and there dump her in my office. I was a bit taken aback at this novel problem, but I soon decided to get in touch with a Magistrate, and leave him to deal with the matter. He got her certified, and despatched to England on leave preparatory to retirement.

Another odd problem confronted me at this time. A young Bengali called at my office and pestered me for a job. He was so persistent and so desperate that at last I asked him : "Why the terrible urgency ?" He then blurted out that he had brought a Swiss girl, the daughter of a Swiss non-commissioned officer, out as his wife, from Switzerland, and that she was now living in a hut at Budge Budge without comforts with her two children, who were both ill, and that she never saw anybody, since his family refused to meet her. I telephoned the Swiss consul, and suggested that he might enquire into the case. I heard later that the consul at the wish of the wife had shipped mother and children back to Switzerland, leaving the husband disconsolate, I believe the unhappy young man subsequently went off his head. Said the consul : "It means a little black blood in Switzerland, but it was the only solution." As indeed I am afraid it was.

I think it was in my first year that I presented the prizes at the Sanskrit College. The College was an ancient institution. Macaulay had done the College the same service in 1836. He noted at the end of the 89th Epistle of Seneca (he had a habit of keeping records of his actions on the classical work he was currently reading) in a sentence made up of Latin and Greek as follows—"April 14, 1836. Hodie praemia distribui tois en to mouseio̱ Sanskritiko̱ neaniskois." I followed Macaulay in this pleasant duty about ninety years later.

A printed address was presented to me, dated (in English) 15th Aswin 1848 Sakabda. The address was in Sanskrit, but a translation was printed below the Sanskrit version.

It ran as follows : The Hon'ble Mr. Oaten, M.A., L.L.B., M.L.C. The Director of Public Instruction, Bengal, in whom endless virtues are found to meet together. This address of benediction:—"Mr. Oaten the full moon of whose fame acquired with unrivalled competence is ascendant in this world and shines brilliantly by illuminating all the quarters and by causing the ocean of knowledge to overflow its shores whose heart has been cleansed and purified by the (sacred) water of learning, venerable, great and pre-eminently successful in the discharge of his duties—may he being blest with a long life in this world attain success (everywhere).

"His wife Mrs. Oaten—who is also adorned with various virtues and is chaste like Savitri and who follows her husband as Laksmi follows Sripati—may she on attaining a long life devoid of sorrow and being respected everywhere have the great luck of enjoying in this world the blessings of heaven as Paulomi (enjoys them in Heaven)."

Well, well, Macaulay had no wife to be flattered and hoped for, and presumably had all the compliments and good wishes to himself, if as is probable the Sanskrit College of 1836 was in the habit of presenting addresses. Certainly, he deserved the compliments far more than I did, for if ever a man caused the ocean of knowledge to overflow its shores, it was Macaulay.

I shall never forget Chitta Ranjan Das, the leader of the Swarajists up to the time of his unexpected death. He was a marvellous orator and when he spoke in the House it often happened that even the ranks of Tuscany could scarce forbear to cheer. As he stood in the House, dressed in khaddar, not by any means an undignified garment, he looked perhaps rather like a short Roman Senator. I never knew him personally—I rather wish I had. But I regarded his sister, wife of Sir Jagadis Chandra Bose, the Presidency College physicist, as a very pleasant friend, and I often dined with her and her husband in Calcutta. She was well informed and a good conversationalist, and if she shared the feelings of her brother, (I am not sure that she did), she concealed the fact successfully.

Fairly early on, I had an experience which seems to have been precisely the same as one which Bishop Whitehead of Madras mentions in his memoirs. A young man seeking employment gained access to me in my office. (The tradition of open access to officials was fairly strong in my time, and only came to be restricted when political outrages in Writers' Buildings took place and more were feared.) The young man asked me to give him a testimonial which would help him to get a job. "But, my dear fellow, I do not know you. How can I testify to your character and attainments without knowing you ?" "Sir", he said earnestly, "I will come and visit you every day this week, and then you will know me !"

I find that I have delayed beyond its chronological sequence mention of the visit of King Albert of Belgium and his Queen Elizabeth to Darjeeling during the monsoon of 1924. They were the guests of Lord and Lady Lytton at Government House, Darjeeling, and while they were there my wife and I had the honour of being asked to dinner there to meet them. We guests were lined up around the anteroom and we were introduced one by one to their Majesties and received a handshake. I remember that at the presentations I had Lt. Colonel Hamilton, the Inspector of Prisons, on my right. Lord Lytton, on presenting him to Queen Elizabeth, said : "This is the officer who looks after my prisoners." "I hope you treat them well", said the Queen, pleasantly. "O yes, ma'am", replied the gallant colonel. Much more happened, which I have forgotten. I remember that my wife looked very well indeed, in a dress of golden silk, and altogether it was an event which we did not soon forget. Unhappily, within a few years King Albert had died in an accident in Belgium.

Another dinner party of less moment was that given to my wife and myself by Archdeacon Grimes of Darjeeling, afterwards Archdeacon of Northampton and Canon of Peterborough Cathedral. It took place in Darjeeling. Bishop Foss Westcott was the only other guest. Before we sat down, Grimes said to the Bishop : "Bishop, will you say grace ?" "No, Grimes, you say it, you're the host", said the Bishop. "O look, they are going to quarrel about it", said my wife, who sometimes said things that ought not to be said. However, Grimes complied, and we sat down to a pleasant meal. There was another occasion, but that is another story to be told later. Grimes had come out to India as an engineer, but under the influence of Bishop Gore changed his profession to that of holy orders.

It was in 1924 that I bought my first car. A very good Indian friend of mine, Gupta, of Sibpur College, offered to teach me to drive. Gupta, who was married to an American lady, was the son of Sir Krishna Gupta, who for some years sat on the India Office Council in London. Bengal at that time had just instituted a rule that drivers must have a driving certificate (of capacity to drive) from the police. I think this was instituted in India before it was law in England. I drove with Gupta to the police station. Gupta went in, and apparently told the police that I was a high official, and that I could drive. He came out with a certificate of capacity. I had no driving test. Some time later a Bengali clerk stepped off the pavement into the road at right angles, with an umbrella over his face. I could not avoid him, and I broke his leg. There was then no duty in such cases to report to the police. I took him to a hospital, and saw that he was comfortable, and said I would pay his expenses. (There was no such thing as compulsory insurance in those days.) I telephoned his employers who said at once that they would pay his wages while he was away. When he got better, he called at my office and said he hoped that as some compensation I would give his son a job in the Education Department ! I said very kindly that I could not do that. The accident had been entirely his own fault, and I felt that I had discharged my obligations.

At some time during my Directorship, there was a Conference of Directors of Education at Simla. There I met Sir George Anderson of the Panjab, Littlehailes of Madras, and other well-known names in Indian education. I discovered at this conference how different were the problems of Bengal from those of other Provinces, owing to the enormous spread in Bengal of the unaided and uncontrolled high schools. It soon became clear to me that many of the discussions in the Conference had little significance for the problems of Education in Bengal.

On one evening we were all invited to an evening party to meet the Viceroy and his wife, Lord and Lady Irwin. It was a pleasant occasion and doubtless I met several people of interest and importance. At this distance of time I remember only one introduction. An aide came up to me and said that Lady Irwin wished to speak to me. I was presented and found her very charming. It appeared that she wished to consult me (as she did others, doubtless) as to a fitting subject to which she might direct one of her charities. I remember suggesting a Training College for women teachers. I think ultimately she came down on the side of a nursing project.

About this time I made the acquaintance of a Muslim of middle class status, named Mohsin Ali. He told me many stories of Muslim life and customs in Calcutta. He described to me the marriage customs of the Muslims of Calcutta. He told me that, after a wedding, there is a procession through the streets, in which bride and bridegroom go in separate carriages. He said that on one occasion two processions crossed each other at right angles, and somehow the wrong bride in each case followed the wrong bridegroom. The mistake was not discovered till the next morning, when the priests met and decided in consultation with the respective familis that two pairs had better stay as they had by accident sorted themselves out. I advised Mohsin Ali to give his account of Muslim marriage customs wider publicity, and accordingly he contributed an article on the subject to the Calcutta Review. I fear he received much adverse criticism from some of his co-religionists for "blowing the gaff". I remember him begging me to put him up for Tollyganj Golf Club, but I knew their rules and customs, and as we should both have incurred a rebuff, I had regretfully to decline.

On one occasion towards the end of Lord Lytton's time in Bengal, the Swarajits, in pursuance of their relentless campaign to discredit the Diarchical system of Government and make it unworkable, threw out the Education Budget. As stated before, Education was one of the subjects administered by Ministers responsible to the Legislature, and as such the annual Budget providing for the expenses of Education was within the competence of the Legislature, and had to be voted by it. The salaries of persons appointed by the Secretary of State for India were not subject to the vote, but were provided separately. In the case of the rejection of the Budget, the Governor had a reserve power to certify essential expenditure, but he decided on this occasion to take the opportunity afforded him by the rejection of the Budget to teach the legislators and the people of Bengal generally some of the political facts of life.

I was summoned to Government House, Darjeeling, where the Governor was then in residence, and directed to give three months' notice of dismissal to all the Education staff, (other than Secretary of State appointees), both Inspectors and teachers. This meant signing about nearly four hundred letters of dismissal. The dismissal notices stated that as the Legislature had provided no money from which the employees' salaries could be paid it was necessary to notify them that after three months their appointments would terminate. The effect was electric and startling. It is said that one man fell senseless on receipt of the letter. I am not sure that he did not die. All the four hundred, and hundreds of their relatives, at once lobbied the Member of the Council urging them to pass the Budget when it was submitted again. Three months later the Budget was re-submitted and passed by a large majority. The whole episode was a cruel but salutary lesson in elementary politics, and I think there was after it a greater realisation of the meaning of the phrase "Responsible Government" which had been used in the Montagu-Chelmsford Report.

Before the hot weather of 1926 my family and I went to England on leave for six months. We travelled over land again, and arrived in England just after the serious crisis of the General Strike had been surmounted. My wife's parents were both dead, but we had pleasant reunion with my father, who was now 70, and though retired from active work, still busy with his life-long hobby of bee-keeping. Our stay in England was uneventful, but it gave me a much needed rest after the very arduous labours of the Directorship. We returned to India in the autumn. Lord Lytton was approaching the end of his term of office, to be succeeded by Sir Stanley Jackson.

Among my experiences under Lord Lytton, two events must be added to the record. one pleasant and one unpleasant.

Some of us were summoned to Government House (in Calcutta) and presented by Lord Lytton with signed copies of himself in full robes. That was the pleasant episode.

The other episode went far towards undoing any reconciliation between Government House and the University which I had hoped to foster. Lord Lytton in his capacity as Chancellor of the University had been the recipient of many books published under the aegis of the University.

When Lord Lytton was preparing to leave, the problem arose what should be done with these books. Some of them were English publications. Some were Bengali or Sanskrit texts. In my view only two courses were open to Lord Lytton. He should either have taken them to England with him, as indeed I did with my presentation copies. Alternatively, he should have left them to be added to the Government House Library. He adopted a third and fatal course. Wilkinson, presumably under H.E.'s direction sent them back to the University, with a covering letter, which I can only hope for H.E.'s reputation as a gentleman that he did not dictate. In any case either he or Wilkinson was guilty of appalling insensitivity and even rudeness. The wording was an inconceivable affront to the University and was regarded by the Syndicate as such. It ran, so far as I can now recall its terms : "I am directed by His Excellency the Chancellor to return these books to you, as he thinks they will be of greater use to you than to him." It was incredible bad manners, and though I had a regard for Wilkinson, I can only hope that the betise was his, rather than Lord Lytton's and was accounted for by the rush of work before getting away. If the words were the Chancellor's my regard for him definitely sinks. The Syndicate's retort was terse. I cannot now remember whether I attended the meeting at which the decision was taken, but even if I did, I could not have altered the decision. A resolution was carried that in future gifts of University publications shall not be made to the Chancellor. So Sir Stanley Jackson was deprived of books which otherwise might have come to his library. I do not suppose he minded. In such wise did the University lick its wounds.

Lord Lytton acted as Viceroy during four months from April to August, 1925, and Sir John Kerr acted as Governor of Bengal vice Lord Lytton. I had the opportunity of seeing how successful the right type of I.C.S. man could be in such a superior post, and it made one wonder whether the custom of importing Governors from England for the three Presidencies was wise or necessary. It was a pleasure to see Sir John move at social functions easily and freely among his guests, large numbers of whom he knew well. I experienced at his hands one interesting piece of administration, which showed how he understood Bengali feeling. At an examination held at Sibpur College a lecturer who had coached (for cash) a student was invigilating at an examination at which the pupil was sitting.

Presumably by prior arrangement the student called to the paper. The lecturer took it away to study it and then handed it back to the student with some of the problems worked out on the paper. The fraud was detected, and a disciplinary Board recommended dismissal, which I confirmed. Dismissal needed the Governor's final authority. Kerr confirmed the dismissal, but directed that the offender should be given what he called an eleemosynary pension. Tempering justice with mercy in this way showed a keen appreciation of Bengali sentiment.

During Lytton's Governorship the Department produced a Primary Education Bill for Bengal, which aimed at extending education on the lowest scale to more children. Lindsay was responsible for drafting the Bill, and it constituted a small step on the road to universal primary education. I cannot now remember the details, but I seem to recall that on the financial side the zemindar and the ryot contributed respectively in the proportion of 2 to 2½ in respect of each project. The ryot of course contributed to only one project whereas the zemindar contributed to many. Shortly after this the Linlithgow Agricultural Commission toured the Province. Lord Lytton directed that I should give evidence before it. When the time came, it so happened that I was feeling wretchedly under the weather, and I really should have stayed away. But I decided not to ask to be excused. The Committee, I remember, [illegible] I thought primary education could improve [illegible] answer to which would have required a long essay. [illegible] asked me why the ryot paid more than the zemindar [illegible] project. I was feeling very ill, and longing to get away. [illegible] could not really think straight, and I said, on the spur of the moment, "I imagine it is because there are more zemindars in the cabinet than there are ryots!" A friend of mine who was on the Commission came out and said he trembled for my future as a result of that answer, but nothing came of it. Perhaps the left wingers on the Commission liked it. Anyway, I was not really responsible for my actions that day, as I was feeling so ill.

I ought to mention briefly the subject of European Education, that is to say, the education of the resident English or Anglo-Indian (mixed race) children. Though Government maintained the Kurseong school for such children, in the main this was provided by religious bodies, whose institutions were given grants. The Martiniere School in Calcutta was an independent high schools, which I think received grants. It was founded by Claude Martin of Lucknow fame. The Department gave in all about 10 lakhs of rupees annually to the various European institutions. This grant was frequently attacked by the Swarajists in House, and the attacks on it were a sort of hardy annual. I came into the business more than usual, since in the matter of European Education, which was a reserved subject, and not controlled by an Indian Minister responsible to the House, I dealt directly with Sir James Donald, the Member in Charge, so that to that limited extent I was not only Director but Secretary to Government. I once prepared for Sir James Donald's use a statement showing that the contribution from England and Europe generally towards Indian Education was about 10 lakhs of rupees annually, so that it was not wholly unfair that Government in return should subsidise English education, i.e., the education of English and Anglo-Indians to the same extent. But the Swarajists returned again and again to the attack.

I have mentioned few of my colleagues in this narrative, apart from those in Presidency College, mainly because in the office I came very little into contact with them. John Bottomley did the arduous job of Assistant Director during much of my Directorship, and in later years became Director. Apart from him the man to whom perhaps I owed as much as anybody was Michael West. He was a most able educational theorist, and I remember a book of his published in my time, the title of which I fear escapes me, as very stimulating reading. My debt to him arose in this way. Exhibitions of the work of Government were occasionally sent round the province in a train, as an educative measure. For the educational part of the exhibition, which the Secretariat used to ask me to organise, I always turned to Michael West, and I never turned in vain. He was keen on education for its own sake, and he wellcomed the opportunity of spreading it, in however unorthodox a manner. I owed much also to the senior Bengali clerical staff of the office, whose ability and devotion to their work were of great value to me.

Some time during the years in which I was Director, in 1925, I think, I was asked by an Indian friend to join him in welcoming Miss Clara Butt, the well-known singer, and her husband Mr. Kennerley Rumford, to a small seance of Indian Music. For an hour we listened to songs and instrumental music, rendered without of course the assistance of scores (Indian notation was then in its infancy). It was obviously beautifully executed, and the pity of it was that I did not know enough to understand it, or appreciate it properly. At the end of the performance, Clara Butt whispered to me, fortunately not in the hearing of her Indian host or of the executants: "This is where we in Europe were four hundred years ago." The remark at that time struck me as cheap and not very gracious. Whether it had any critical validity, I do not know, owing to my lack of knowledge of the techniques and history both of Indian and European music.

A minor event in the history of the School for Europeans and Anglo-Indians at Kurseong is perhaps worth a brief mention. The Headmaster instituted a system of "Houses" in the School, and asked for my directions as to the names to be given to the Houses. At my suggestion he gave them the following names : Mallory House, Irvine House and Kellas House. The names were commemorative of the three British mountaineers who perished in the abortive assault on Everest a year or two previously.

9

DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION—2

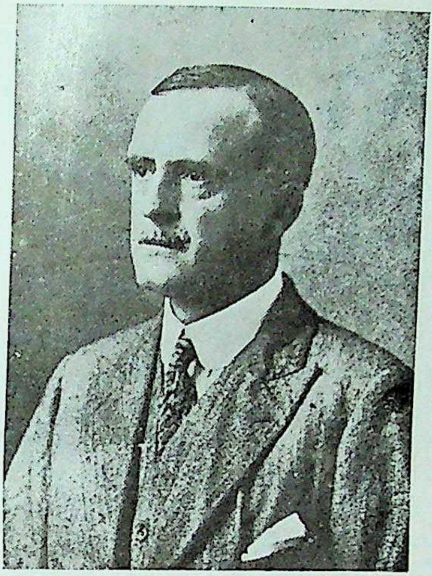
(1927-28)

It was a mystery to me why an ex-Test Captain of English cricket and a useful golfer was thought a suitable man to take charge of the difficult, sensitive and troublesome province of Bengal. But so it was. Lord Lytton departed and Sir Stanley reigned in his stead.

I seem to remember also that it was about this time that I began to serve under the capable, loquacious and unscrupulous Fazlul Haq, who formed a Government, and became Minister of Education.

The time for Convocation came round again, and Wilkinson, who had learnt from Lytton what to do about Convocation speeches, sent the usual request for ideas to me.

I followed my usual practice and sent along a draft speech. I made its main theme the physical deficiencies which recent reports on the health of University students had emphasised. (On a recent television programme about India it was made clear that at this date (1967) the health of the students of Calcutta University (now the numerically greatest in the world) is even more horrifyingly defective.) I heard nothing more as to my draft speech until we (Lindsay and I) were summoned to Government House the night before the Convocation, when it became evident that Sir Stanley had ignored my draft and either written his own, or got Wilkinson to write a speech for him. I remember Lindsay and myself marking some parts of the speech which needed changing, but we had a very short sight of it, and I do not remember the phrases which gave so much trouble on the morrow being in it.



Prof. Oaten in 1928 when he left India for ever

Prof. Oaten practising as a Barrister in England in 1945.

to get up a team to play St. Paul's School at cricket", she said to Jackson. "Haven't touched a bat for ten years", he said brusquely, "and don't mean to." A painful silence ensued. I looked daggers across the table.

At this time the Swarajists in the Legislative Council were led by J.M. Sen Gupta. He was a Cambridge University man. Rumour had it that he had married the daughter of his landlady in England, and that the failure of society in Calcutta to receive her made him hostile. I never met the lady, and I have no idea whether the story is true. He had sometimes found Oxbridge contempt for so-called minor or redbrick Universities. This revealed itself once in a violent attack which he once made in the House on the Secretary of State appointed Indian Educational Service members. I can still in my mind's eye see him declaiming his tirade against the Service. "Third class men from third class Universities", he called us. I met Sen Gupta in the Calcutta Club later that evening. We were sitting in long chairs and I was having a drink. I forget whether he was doing the same. "Hallo, Jogendra", I said, "you were a bit hard on my Service this afternoon." "Forget it, my dear chap", he answered, "I have to say these things." I have had a very poor opinion of politicians ever since. So many of them 'have to say these things'. In fact in Bengal, though we were not all Oxford or Cambridge men, (as if that mattered) many of us were from the two senior Universities, and most of those from other places of learning had reasonable degrees.

As I have mentioned already, my final Minister of Education was Fazlul Haq. He could be easy to get on with, and he could be difficult. Once or twice he annoyed me by doing what I can only call his Haroun al Raschid trick. He would go out to educational institutions without Lindsay or myself. Once when there was a strike on at the Bethune Ladies College, and the College was closed in consequence, he went with J.M. Sen Gupta the Opposition leader, without me, late in the evening when it was dark, to call on the Principal, Miss Wright, to discuss the situation with her. Her residence was in the Indian quarter of the city, at the College. She was a rather nervous woman, getting near the end of her service. She did not know them by sight, and had to take their words as to their identity. She came very near hysteria as a result of the visit. I did not like it one bit, and Lindsay and I went to the Governor to see if he could get Fazlul Haq to toe the line and take me or Lindsay with him on such visits. But nothing came of it. On another occasion Fazlul Haq went to the Eden Hindu Hostel, the boarding part of the Presidency College, by himself. The Warden, a Hindu, seeing a Muslim approach, whom he did not know from Adam, was, Fazlul Haq claimed, rude to him, and he wanted him punished I stood out against that, and nothing was done to the Warden.

Fazlul Haq once talked to me frankly about his conception of ministerial power. "What's the good of office without power?" he once said to me. "You English create an office and then tie the occupant up in all sorts of restrictions and legal knots so that his power is restricted and he has no freedom of independent movement." He clearly showed his interpretation of the rights of his office in an incident which I have never forgotten. There was a Hindu lad whose uncle was a member of the Legislative Council, and a supporter of Fazlul Haq's Government. This lad was a third-class Matriculate, and had applied to the Presidency College for admission as a first year student. Presidency College, as I have already said, thought of itself as the Balliol of India, and maintained its high standard (relative to other Colleges) by confining its admissions to first class Matriculates. The lad was accordingly rejected by the College Governing body. Fazlul Haq sent for me and asked me to arrange for the admission of the lad. I pointed out that the Governing body was a pretty strong body, and had several important men, Indian and European, on the board. Fazlul Haq insisted. I told him that, though the Presidency College was directly subordinate to Government authority, and so subject to his control, it was most inexpedient to override the Governing body. He again insisted. So at last I said: "If you will give me written orders, I will do what you want." (I had the power to take the matter up to the Governor, and get him to override Fazlul Haq's order, but I thought that I ought not to embarrass the Governor by referring such a comparatively small matter to him). Fazlul Haq wrote to me. "Please arrange for the admission of this youth to the Presidency College. Considerations of efficiency cannot have any weight nowadays."

I wrote to Stapleton, the Principal, and explained the situation to him, and asked him to push the matter through if he could. The lad was accordingly admitted.

Fazlul Haq then sent for me again. "Oaten", he said, "I want you to know why I have to get this lad admitted to the College. You know that my majority in the House is *one*. That one is the Uncle of this lad. He says he will vote for the other side unless I get his nephew into the College. You English invented the damned system of Government. You really must help me work it." So now I knew why the matter had been so urgent. He had not told me before. Anyway he "worked it" so well that he remained in power as Bengal's Prime Minister for ten years, long after I had left India, and finally fell, according to what I read in the newspapers (I am no authority on this) because of a scandal arising because he wrote to a Magistrate telling him how to decide a case before him. The facts came out in a High Court action, I understand.

There was one small incident about this time which gave me a lot of trouble. A Headmistress of a Government owned and maintained girls' school in Chittagong, a Hindu, had admitted to the school a girl, or rather a woman, aged 24, who wanted to be educated. One day this individual had a fit of hysteria. The Headmistress coped with that situation by putting the woman's head under a cold water douche. When the news of this became known, it appeared that she had reasonably important relations, and there were murmurs in the House about brutality to girl students. Fazlul Haq was worried in the House, and in his turn worried me about it, asking what I was going to do in the matter. He would not accept the view that what the Headmistress had done was probably the best course she could have taken. Eventually I sent her a message saying she should not have acted in that way, considering the age of the woman, as it was a technical assault. Fazlul Haq was able to assure the complainers that action had been taken, and the matter dropped. As soon as I could find an opportunity, I visited the school, assured the Head that I thought none the worse of her for the eipsode, and that the affair would not affect her future. I may add that cases of quite elderly pupils in schools were not unknown, as students who failed went on sometimes year after year hoping against hope. As I write these words I am reminded of the student in my early days who came to me begging me to coach him for the B.A. examination. When I asken him his age, it appeared that he was not young, and so I asked him how many times he had failed in the B.A. examination. He answered "Thrice, Sir". I replied "Why not give up ? It isn't much use going on, is it ?" "Sir", he said, earnestly, "I have every confidence in chance !" I remember that my wife asked this particular chap to tea, and, not appreciating the fact that it was against etiquette for him to refuse, pressed goodies on him till he nearly burst.

I cannot remember everything in chronological order, but it may have been about this time that a Hindu asked me to pay a visit to his family house in South Calcutta. I was unable to find time for the visit, but I chatted to him about it, and asked him why he wanted me to go. He replied that he wanted me to inspect the school which was maintained for the children of the house. I asked how many there were. He said: "Eighty". His home must have been a splendid example of the Hindu Joint Family, with so many children as that !

On one occasion Fazlul Haq informed me that he wanted me to accompany him on an all day visit to some distant town to inspect schools and colleges. I cannot now remember which town it was, but it entailed an all-night journey, starting in the evening, and arriving soon after dawn. On arrival we were met by Muslim priests who told Fazlul that the new moon had been seen in the night, which fact entailed on him fasting all day during a hot and arduous tour of inspection. Wherever we went I was regaled with refreshments which I certainly needed, while during the said refreshments the Minister sat behind a screen out of sight. If he did not break the strict Muslim fasting law, I do not know how he endured the fatigues of the day. I can only hope that he had some nourishment on the quiet. In the evening we entrained for Calcutta, and reached that place next morning. On the assumption that he kept the fast, I feel that it was just as well that he kept out of sight and did not see me enjoying my food and drink.

The Bethune College strike to which I have already referred arose out of the political agitation which was nowadays, with the struggle against Diarchy, almost continuous. The College girls struck for some reason or another, absented themselves from their classes, and those who were resident in the College vacated their rooms. The Principal did not know where they had gone. One of them was, it was rumoured, received into Subhash Bose's house, which rumour, as he was unmarried, added to our uneasiness. Fazlul Haq wanted the strike settled as soon as possible. Miss Wright demanded certain conditions from the girls before the re-opening of the College. I believe, if I remember rightly, that she wanted an apology and a promise of good future behaviour. The strike dragged on, and eventually the Governing Body, which included Miss Stapleton, Stapleton's sister, met at my request in my office. It was decided to override Miss Wright and re-open the College without prior conditions. I cannot but think that it was a correct decision. There was a great deal of worry about what might be happening to the girls, and the tender plant of higher famale education could not endure a great deal of bruising in the hurly burly of politics. It was better to get back to normal as soon as practicable. I may add that some time previously I had appointed a very charming Calcutta girl (daughter of a Calcutta English business man) who had a Chelsea Physical Training College diploma, to supervise the physical training of the young women, and that she persuaded them to jump about in ways somewhat foreign to the older generation of Indian ladies, much to the benefit of their health. Her name was Miss Doris Webber. Fazlul Haq accompanied me once to a display by the young ladies and quite enjoyed it, though he from time to time criticised the poor physique of some of them. For gymnastics could not eradicate in one year defects due to many causes, such as climate, food habits, lack of fresh air, and hereditary factors.

While I am on the subject of physical training, I might mention that the Department was frequently harassed by the confusion in the Bengali mind between military training and physical training. I had references down from the Secretariat asking my opinion of Swarajist and University demands that all students should be compelled to undertake military training. This was really a political demand, and was generally supported by the claim that it would have a great benefit on the health of the students. The demand was quite absurd and impracticable. As there were about 30000 of them, the financial cost would have been high, taking money which might be spent, assuming it was available, on other educational projects. Thousands of students would have resented compulsion, and were so undernourished that they could not have been trained adequately. Instructors for so many could not be spared. The answer to the argument that the physique of students would be improved is simply that physical training could do the job immensely more cheaply, and much more efficiently. For those who wanted military training there was the 2nd Calcutta Auxiliary (University) Battalion, composed of University students, of which some time previously I had under taken the Command, with the rank of Major. In this regiment those who were really keen could find fulfilment.

There was a small matter of language which irritated me throughout my service, but which may appropriately find mention here. In English usage one never says "The Oxford University" but either "Oxford University" or "The University of Oxford". (Of course it is different when the words "Oxford University" are used adjectivally, as in "The Oxford University syllabus). Bengali usage insisted on using the phrase "The Calcutta University", and the custom continued in the office in spite of strict orders to the contrary. Time and again I tried to kill the custom, but it kept on recurring. I boiled over when draft clauses for the constitution of the new University of Dacca came before me for my critical observations. One clause as drafted ran thus: "The University shall sue and be sued under the name and style of "The Dacca University". I noted to Government: "It would be deplorable if the new University is to sue and be sued under a name and style which constitute a literary solecism." I suggested "University of Dacca". And in the end "University of Dacca" it was. But on the whole I lost the battle. When ten years ago my old pupil Promatha Nath Banerji, loaded with successes and University Honorary Degrees, wrote to me, he said that his life work had been mainly devoted to the development of "*The Calcutta University*".

Towards the end of my time in India, we heard an alarming story that an English lady, by no means old, had arrived in India for the purpose of addressing students on the subject o syphilis and gonorrhoea. It was learnt soon that she came on behalf of the British Social Hygiene Council, to propagate the ideals of that Society, which briefly were purity of life and adherence to the laws of health, leading to personal and national well-being. She was Mrs. Sybil Neville-Rolfe, wife of a Naval officer, and Secretary of the Council. We heard that there was some talk of banning her meetings in Bombay, but that eventually she had been allowed to address meetings of students. The Bengal Government were very nervous at first, but when finally the Maharaja of Nadia, who was a member of the Government, said it was all right from the Hindu point of view, all opposition ceased. Eventually it was decided that I should be Chairman of a students' meeting which Mrs. Neville-Rolfe would address. I did not know what to expect, for the prospect of a woman talking to male students on such topics was a bit daunting. When the day came, an enormous number of students packed the meeting. I introduced Mrs. Neville-Rolfe in the usual well-chosen words, and then we listened to a speech by a really well-educated and cultured woman, setting out the views of the Council, a speech filled with words like syphilis, gonorrhoea, streptococci and other medico-scientific words germane to her subject. The audience listened attentively, and obviously followed and was interested by the speaker's arguments. It was an experiment that was successful, and Mrs. Neville-Rolfe was duly grateful for my assistance. After my retirement she got me appointed a member of her committee, and I attended many committee meetings in London under the Chairmanship of Mr. L.S. Amery (the well-known politician).

It was in this period of my Directorship that the Government of India asked the Government of Bengal to obtain a report on the "University" which had been inaugurated by Rabindra Nath Tagore at Santiniketan, some hundred miles or more due north of Calcutta. Why the Government of India wanted the report I do not know. Perhaps some question of recognising the "University", or of supporting it with a grant, had arisen.

I was asked by the Government of Bengal to visit Santiniketan and write a report. I decided to take A.H. Harley, Principal of the Calcutta Madrasa, the large specialised Muslim College, with me. He was a man of considerable learning in his own subjects, which were Persian and Islamic studies generally, and though Santiniketen was a Hindu institution, he was a man of broad interests who would be able to help me form a judgement on Santiniketan.

We duly made the journey by train. Roads in Bengal were not good enough to make journeys by car. We called on the Acting Principal, Andrews, the same man as I had met many years before in 1910 when I stayed at the Delhi Mission College with him for a night. He was greatly changed. He received us lying on a couch, dressed in a long flowing white linen robe, from which bare pink feet protruded. I cannot even remember that he got up to greet us. Possibly he was not well. He appeared to me to have become very much orientalised. Tagore unfortunately was not in residence. We went round the "classes". They were all held in the open under shady trees. We entered the library, and met certain foreign (European) savants whom Tagore had invited to join his "University" for periods of time. We visited a model village some way off which Tagore maintained as a model for the development of village life in Bengal. After seeing what we could we returned to Calcutta, and sent in our report to Government.

It was in this period also that I was favoured one day in my office by a call from the adult son of a Bengal rajah, who was a zemindar or land owner and not a reigning prince. After some desultory conversation, it appeared that it was a purely social call, without, as far as I could gather, any desire to seek a favour or ask for anything. We talk for a while on current topics, and he never seemed to get to any point. But at last he said: "I went shooting last week and shot a tiger. Would you care for one of its claws?" "O yes," I said, "that would be a very interesting souvenir." He went away. Shortly afterwards he arrived with the claw, beautifully mounted on gold, in a plush case! I never learnt what he wanted, if anything. It was apparently just a friendly call.

And as I write I am reminded of an incident which should properly have been in the preceding chapter. Shortly after I became Director, my old Panjabi man-servant or bearer, a most capable man, who had in conjunction with my cook often conjured adequate meals from a fire cooked over a hole in the ground, and had been with me throughout most of my time in

Probyn's Horse, suddenly turned up. The news of my elevation had obviously reached the Panjab. He offered to become my bearer, and said he wanted no wages. As I had a very good bearer I said "No". It turned out that his brother in the Panjab was a maker of tennis rackets and sports gear, in Sialkot, and he wanted to accompany me on my tours of inspection and he tout for business, with the lustre of the Director of Public Instruction in the background, in all the Schools and Colleges which I visited. Verily the ways of the Oriental are devious and strange. Had I fallen for the suggestion and not spotted what the bearer was up to, I might soon have been suspected of taking a commission on his tennis racket sales !

Late in February 1928 my wife and children left India for England. The boy was nearly nine and the girl over seven. I was now alone and consequently spent a good deal of time in one or other of my two clubs. On February 28 I was sitting one afternoon in the Calcutta Club, chatting to Sir Probhash Mitter. Suddenly Lord Sinha, who was resident in the Club, appeared from his room, and came up to us somewhat excitedly, saying, not "Eureka", which would have been suitable, but "I've got it, I've got it !" Then he read out to us a passage from John Stuart Mill's "Representative Government" which he had been reading, as follows :

"The cases in which the greatest practical obstacles exist to the blending of nationalities, are when the nationalities which have been bound together are nearly equal in numbers, and in the other elements of power. In such cases, each, confiding in its strength, and feeling itself capable of maintaining an equal struggle with any of the others, is unwilling to be merged with it. . . . When nations thus divided are under a despotic government which is a stranger to all of them, or which, though sprung from one, yet feeling greater interest in its own power than in any sympathies of nationality, assigns no privilege to either nation, and chooses its instruments indifferently from all, in the course of a few generations identity of situation often produces harmony of feeling, and the different races come to feel towards each other as fellow countrymen; particularly if they are dispersed over the same tract of country. But *if the era of aspiration to free government arrives before this fusion* *has been effected, the opportunity has gone by for effecting it.*" (My underlining).

In these words, by which he was obviously excited, as though he had come across them for the first time, Lord Sinha proclaimed his utter disbelief in the possibility of a *free united India.* If Congress could have realised this earlier, freedom might have come before 1947.

Within a week, on the 6th of March, 1928, I heard that Lord Sinha had died. His strange prophesy, uttered in such a striking fashion, was thus fixed indelibly on my mind.

At the end of March of this year I went to England on long leave. On arrival I discovered that I had suffered a grave and shattering family catastrophe. As the source of the catastrophe had been in Bengal, I had a strong revulsion of feeling, and with great reluctance decided to leave India, and I did my best to forget it. I only partially succeeded. No one can forget India, who has ever lived there. In 1931 I married again, this time to Mrs. Kathleen Mary Briscoe, widow of a solicitor who had died in a motor accident, a few years after their marriage, and step-daughter of Thomas Mullett Ellis, an architect, author and publicist of Creek House, Shepperton, Middlesex, who had helped to found the "Evening News"; and in the words of Winston Churchill's autobiography "I lived happily ever after". I was very unwell when I left India, and it was some months before I was well again. I became a barrister at Law of the Middle Temple Inn in 1932, and spent the remainder of my working life as a member of that profession. I never returned to India.

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Reflections

Thus my career in India was ended, finally and utterly. I broke with India, seldom met any of my old colleagues when they came home, immersed myself in legal life in London and the South East, and tried to forget India. Of course India still impinged in many ways. I was asked to sit on a committee to select a lecturer in English for Calcutta University. Edmund Blunden was also on the committee. I remember that he fought for a man with a Classical (Latin and Greek) training. I supported a man who had a degree in English studies, as I knew the University people liked that better, but Blunden carried the day. Once when I was lunching with the High Sheriff of Sussex, our talk got on to the Indian Penal Code. I remarked that under certain conditions under Indian law adulterers could get two years imprisonment. "Good gracious", he said, "lucky it's not so here. There would not be enough prisons !" Years after, Sir A.T. Lawrence, the Judge, later Lord Oaksey, asked me to lunch at the Sussex Assizes, because he heard I was from India. He asked me whether I thought the Simon proposals during the War had any chance of being accepted. I gave him a definite "No". Gandhi would have all or nothing. There was the reminder of Probyn's Horse, previously referred to, when General Baldwin's son came before the Norwich Assizes. Gilchrist came into my London Chambers one day, and was introduced to the head of the Chambers, the (second) Earl of Halsbury.

Once, or it may be twice, I was asked by Calcutta University to represent the University at some Conference of Universities or Societies. That way it would cost the University nothing, and I was glad to help. In connection with these functions I seem to remember pleasant visits to Lambeth Palace, to meet the Archbishop of Canterbury, to the Inner Temple Hall, to meet Sir John Simon, and to the Royal Albert Dock, where I found a first cousin of mine, was Superintendent, talking us round. I even remember a mangnificent lunch which we delegates had in the Grand Trianon, Versailles. We sat at a table spread in the central hall, open to the fresh air on two sides, which came in through the stately pillars.

At the time of the Round Table Conference, I remember paying a courtesy call on Fazlul Haq. Oriental-wise, he thought I had come to seek a favour, which was not the case, and he offered me the Principalship of the Calcutta Madrasa. I declined with thanks. He said to me, laughingly, "Who do you think is in the next room in this Hotel ?" I disclaimed all knowledge. He said : "J.M. Sen Gupta."

Once in Lincoln's Inn I met Promatha Nath Banerji, my old student who had come over to England for a short while to qualify as a Barrister at Law of that Inn.

But time wore on and generally speaking interest in India faded in me, and I did not seek to be reminded of it, and doubtless at the same time India forgot me.

I continued my interest in Freemasonry. I became Worshipful Master of the Old Tonbridgian Lodge No. 4145 (the Lodge of Tonbridge School) in 1942. I was Secretary and then Treasurer of the Lodge for nearly twenty years. In 1948 I received Grand Lodge honours as a Past Assistant Grand Registrar, which went well beyond the peak of my aspirations.

At first the rude ending of my Indian career hurt, and hurt viciously. I had been somebody, and now I was nobody. I often asked myself whether I could not have gone on. In the end I came to the conclusion that I could not have endured India any longer. I had put the question to Prentice. He agreed that I was wise to leave. The Director's job was hard enough for a man with a happy background. I had conducted it without that background for years before the catastrophe. I was spiritually and physically exhausted, and could only face life in entirely new surroundings.

As my new work, my new interests absorbed me, I grew reconciled. I wrote in "Dead World Dreams" :

Push the chequer board away !
Finished is the game I played.
From my memory, day by day,
Bishops, kings and castles fade.

Queens and pawns are near forgot.
Did they, do they matter yet ?
Leave me what the fates allot.
All the rest I would forget.

In the ruin of an age
Ancient sorrows ever shrink.
Let me watch the instant stage
As life drifts toward the brink.

I began to reflect on the past. I had had a truly marvellous experience. I had travelled widely, in a fashion that ordinarily only a man of wealth in Europe could have afforded. The roll call of cities that I had visited and countries that I had entered was long and resonant. I had in Virgil's phrase seen the cities and manners of many men. I had had a hand in the moulding of many young Indian minds, some of them destined to play a part in the India of the future, at a time when one's work was appreciated and one's position was not envied. I had lived for two and a half years in the Panjab and on the North West Frontier, seeing and getting to know Kipling's India, at a time not too far distant from the time when he was there. And if during the First Great War my paths were spread in comparatively pleasant places, and I had not to face its worst trials, perhaps that was a family bonus due to one who lost two brothers and a brother-in-law as a result of the struggle. I had held a great position of power and influence for four years, not entirely without credit. I had sat in a Legislature, been a member of the Syndicate and Senate of one University, and had a hand in the making of another. I had met socially an enormous number of interesting people including the King of Belgium, the Prince of Wales, Viceroys, Governors, Generals, Indian academics, politicians and statesmen, Maharajas, Rajahs, and zemindars, writers like Thompson, Candler, Percy Wren, poets like Mon Mohan Ghosh, and scientists like Sir P.C. Roy and Sir Jagadis Bose. My wide fund of experiences and the memory of some of these contacts was, as Thucydides put it, a possession for ever.

But I gradually told myself, and told myself rightly, that real education must have been the first casualty of the unceasing and continuous political turmoil. With Ministers guided solely by considerations of expediency, with College and schools constantly in rebellion against authority or on strike for political reasons, education must go from bad to worse, and the administration of it be increasingly unsatisfactory and unsatisfying. Thus I spoke to myself, and gradually I grew to feel, that though in happier conditions I would have been glad to carry on, and strive against circumstances to achieve something in the midst of the clash of politics and of decaying standards, I need not repine too much that I had been spared the dust and the heat of the fray.

And when I hear in this year of 1967 that the health of the vast number of students of the University of Calcutta is still shocking, and see or hear on television or learn from Indian friends of deterioration of standards that has without doubt taken place, I know that had I lived out my career in Bengal to the end I could not have affected or changed the course of the development of Calcutta University, or forced on the Colleges or schools of Bengal those higher standards which are necessary to improve the education and health of the students, even if at the same time they limited their numbers. For numbers, it appears, are choking higher education in Bengal. Nor could I have prevented the gradual decline of the standard of English, which though it is still the language higher education is rendering higher education increasingly ineffective and inefficient. For it seems that the inexorble process of decay must go on until in sheer desparation Bengal turns right about and finds salvation in the Bengali language as the medium of school and University teaching. This is not possible now, but it must inevitably come.

I close this record with extracts from a long letter sent to me by my old pupil and friend of 1915 Promatha Nath Banerji dated 8th October, 1956.

"I have served my University now continuously for forty years. . . . I strayed into politics at the general election of 1937, and served these Provinces as a Minister under the Crown during one of the most crucial periods in the history of my country, your country and of the world. I was sworn in as a Minister under the Crown on the very day that the two British dreadnoughts without adequate air cover came to grief at Singapore. I served my country as Minister in charge of various portfolios like Law and Justice, Revenue and Finance, Civil Defence and Civil Supplies during the worst part of World War II.... I have been now Principal of the University Law College for nearly a quarter of a century. Fate then gave me the Vice-Chancellorship of the University. . . .

"I had the good fortune to represent India at Unesco in the Middle East. . . . I presided over the deliberations of that body for nearly six weeks. . . .

"Lord Linlithgow who was so friendly to me and was anxious to appoint me a member of the Viceroy's Executive Council, once asked me, 'Who could you point out as the architects of your personality and character ?' I mentioned two names—H.R. James and E.F. Oaten. . . .

"The great University of Canada, McGill, was pleased to confer on me the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws. I was president of the Universities Conference in Canada (in 1949). I felt very proud that a pupil of yours occupied the highest position among the 91 Universities included within the Conference, including the great Universities of Oxford, Cambridge, London, Edinburgh, Glasgow, McGill, Toronto.

"I was a recipient of honours at the great Universities of Harvard, Boston, New York and Yale. . . . The University of Calcutta conferred on me an honorary degree of Doctor of Letters. . . . . McGill and Toronto both created Chairs for me. I could not accept their kind offer. My father was then very ill, and I was anxious to perform the last rites.

"I have been appointed Tagore Law Professor and in 1957 I propose to deliver my lectures on the development of Public International Law in the Twentieth Century. If I succeed, I shall succeed because of the teaching which I received at your hands at the Presidency College in the years 1913 to 1915. You lectured to us, you may remember, on Public International Law. . . . .

"You remember my wedding reception. The partner of my life left me in April 1950. . . . . She left behind three sons—P.K. Banerji, who at the early age of 30 became High Commissioner for India in Canada. He presided over the Military Commission in Indo-China. S.K. Banerji is Law Officer and a Member of the Executive of the Imperial Tobacco Company of India. My youngest is about to study Public International Law at the Hague. . . .

"My life, both public and private, has been a fairly crowded one, but I have this consolation like Milton—'I have lived for ever in my great Taskmaster's eye.' "

Somehow the receipt of that letter eleven years ago made me feel that some at least of my years in India had been worthwhile.